

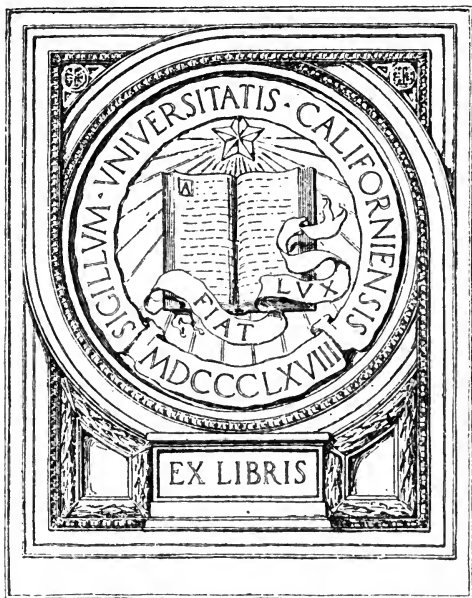
PRESSENT-DAY
JAPANESE



A. M. CAMPBELL
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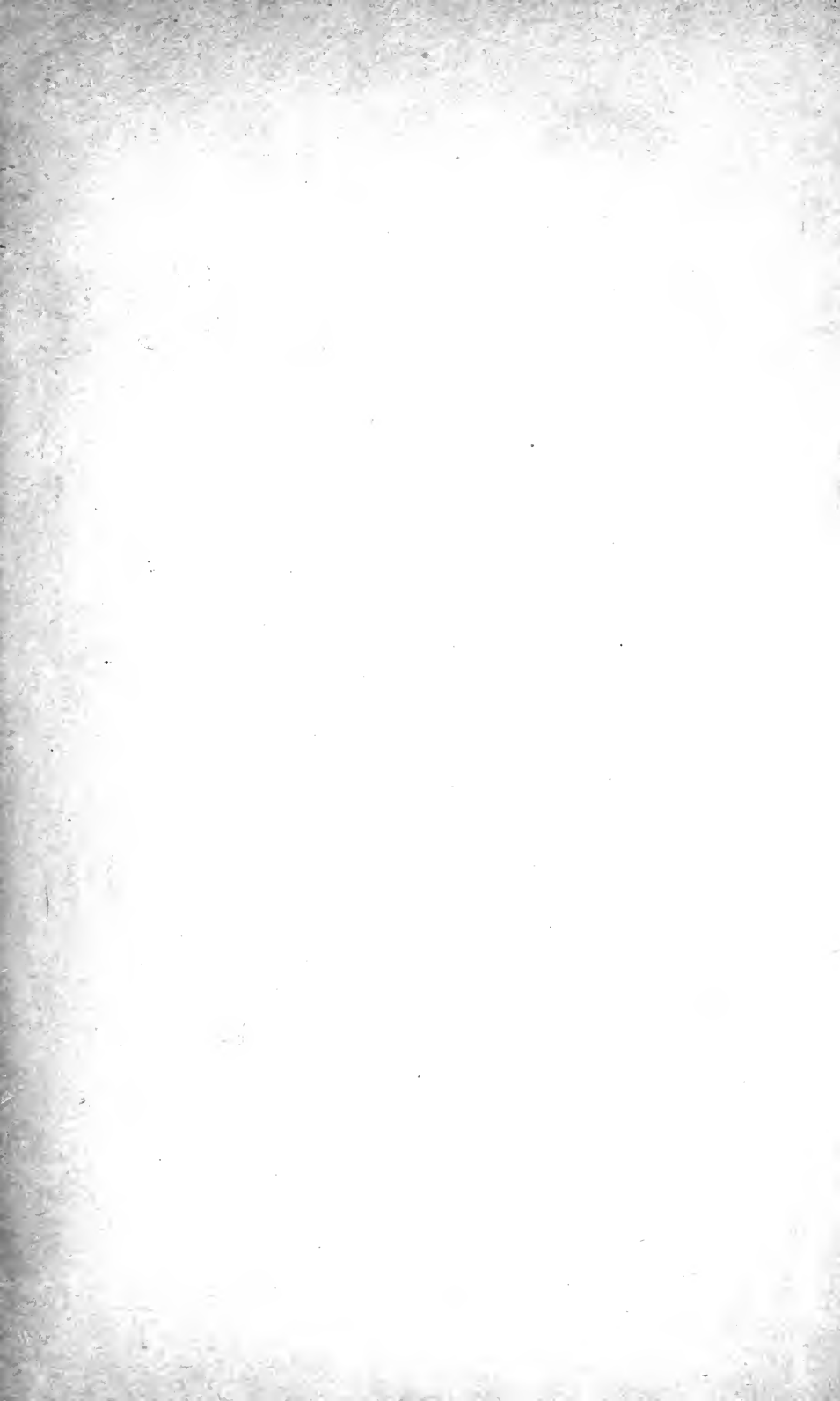
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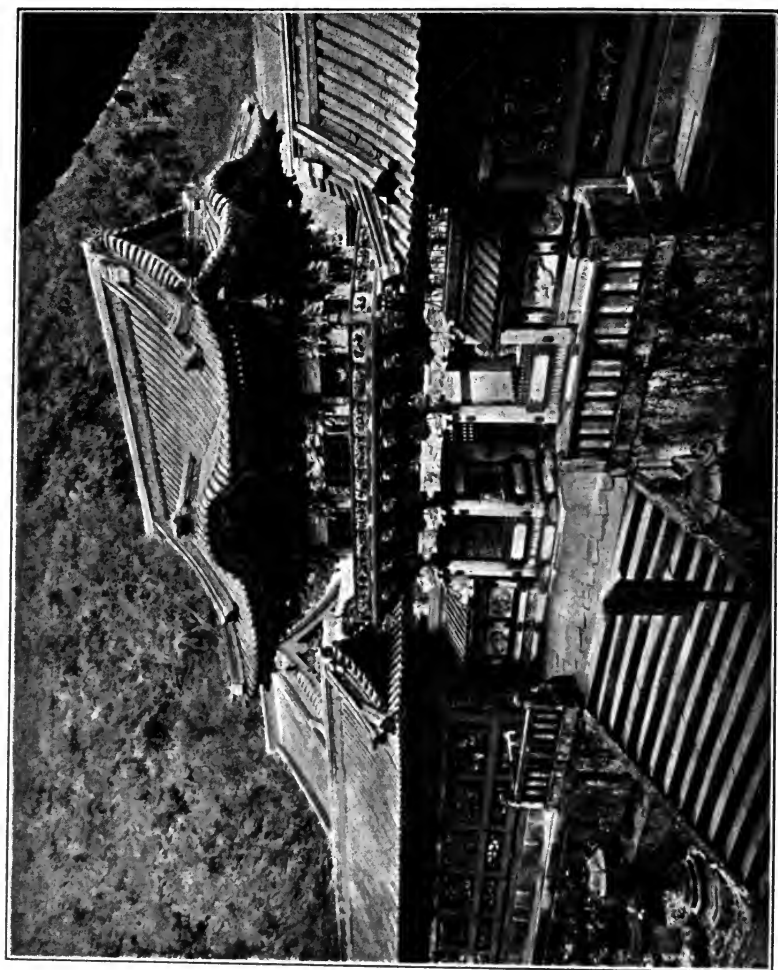


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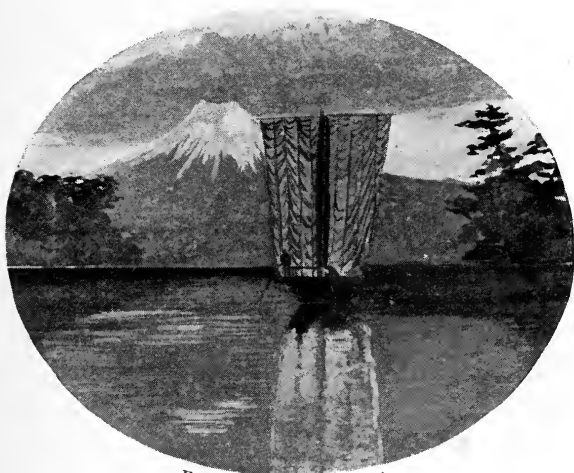


PRESENT-DAY JAPAN

BY

AUGUSTA M. CAMPBELL DAVIDSON, M.A.

11



Fujiyama, the Sacred Mountain.

THE
JAPANESE
CULTURE

PHILADELPHIA

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

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1904

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TO THE
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Preface

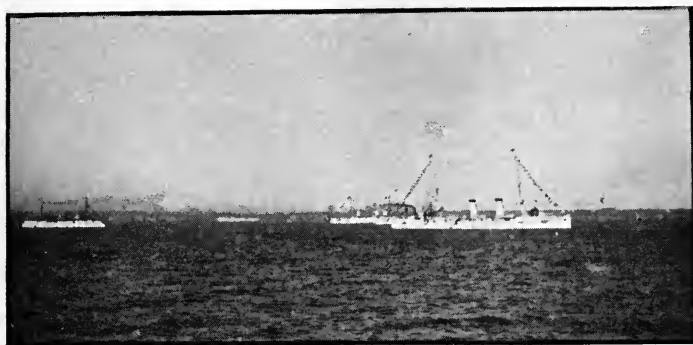
THE letters which form the groundwork of what will be found in the following pages were not in the first instance intended for publication. The writer's apology for adding to the already large number of books on Japan is the frequently-made suggestion that they might prove to be not without interest to a wider circle than that for which they were originally intended, as reflecting the experience of a person arriving in Japan with no feeling but curiosity and gradually falling under the influence of its manifold charm through the sympathy brought by increasing familiarity.

The contrast between first impressions and those received after some degree of such familiarity had been acquired has suggested to the writer that in the case of Japan—more, perhaps, than in that of most foreign countries—the pleasure of a visit depends greatly on a knowledge of the associations connected with what is seen; she is, moreover, convinced that the present achievements of the nation are best understood when considered in the light of its past and with reference to the ethical forces which acted upon it during the centuries of its seclusion. For these reasons she has retained and

amplified the notes on historical and religious subjects meant originally for the information of an intending visitor.

The letters are not dated or separated, because they are not presented in order as written, but have been so arranged that the places and subjects spoken of might be treated with some degree of continuity, passages written soon after arrival being retained by way of introduction to each chapter for the sake of the descriptions which they contain.

LONDON, *March*, 1904.



JAPANESE MEN-OF-WAR.

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IN AN IRIS GARDEN.



A JUNK.

CHAPTER I

YOKOHAMA

OUR first glimpse of the Land of the Rising Sun has been by the inappropriate light of sunset. The proper thing to do is to wake up in the morning and see Fuji glittering close above you, stupendous in majesty, having doffed his cloud-mantle in honour of your arrival. But in our case Fate would not have it so. Instead of blue and smiling seas backed by a glittering white cone transferred to the horizon from amidst the cherry-blossoms of some fan or screen at home, it was something quite different that we saw when we crawled on deck at sunset, a woful company of souls outworn with sea-sickness and a two days' storm—phantoms rising in woe and pallor from the underworld. A sea of curiously transparent blackness, with here a flashing line of light, there a spark of colour, pure fire, it would seem, of gold and red and green, where the rays of the fast disappearing sun caught the tops of the long heaving roll left by the

storm. Far away on the starboard bow was a line of sharp peaks, not rising out of sea or land, but hanging in the heavens in true Japanese teapot style, faintly visible and ghostly pale at first, but gradually looming larger and darker and higher up in the wild, fantastic sky of grey and orange and scarlet. Time went on, but the twilight lingered still, the ghosts, unable to discover "Fusiyama," retired in disgust to the underworld again, and the decks were left to silence. The distant peaks came no nearer to all seeming, but higher every moment and more rugged, range beyond range, they lay in endless mystery of shadowy grey and deep transparent purple under the fading light. Slowly the purple turned to black as the colour sank from sea and sky, and the vision faded into the deep, all-enfolding night, leaving behind it an impression of vague disturbance in my mind. For somehow this grim rampart, looming so darkly in the flaming sky, had been quite alien to any world of fans and cherry-blossoms, and I began to reflect that in spite of certain youthful conceptions derived from "The Mikado," perhaps this land we were approaching never had been quite all tea and ceremonies and Fujiyama. I began to recall certain half-forgotten stories of its stormy past, full of blood and tyranny and the "happy despatch," and the thunders of the China war echoed in my ears as I remembered the tales that had reached Europe concerning it; tales full enough of blood and terror, and far removed from the domain of the teapot and the paper fan.

For hours one saw nothing but this same blackness, broken only by the sudden shining of some guiding light along the unseen coast—red and white, fixed and revolving—and I was duly informed that the coast of Japan is the best lighted in the world. But presently I saw another light, dancing and swaying fitfully on the black water—a soft yellow radiance like a drop of floating light—and another and another behind it—a spectacle more exciting by far, to my ill-regulated mind, than the best equipped lighthouse in the world. For these, I was told, were fishing junks—the lights were their paper lanterns.

Ah ! this was Japan at last. Junks and paper lanterns were quite included in my scheme of the "Japanesey" ; in every way more satisfying than that gloomy mountain barrier seen in the sunset sky. I stood in the bows to watch the dancing globes of light, now increasing to scores—hundreds perhaps—and meanwhile I became aware that there had also been quite another set of ghosts in the lower regions all the time—Japanese spectres these, busily engaged in a wholly earthly toilet, without fear and without reproach, on deck. Coolies, they said, returning from Hawaii, now busy removing the traces of the long voyage in the "Asiatic steerage"—no haunt of luxury, one may well surmise—and putting on long, graceful garments of dark cotton material ; each tying up what was evidently his cabin baggage with careful neatness in a coloured handkerchief, and thereby causing me to groan in spirit as I remembered the dead encumbrance of my own luggage in the hold. It was now one o'clock in the morning, but the idea of bed was absurd. How could one go to bed with junks and paper lanterns all around and Japan itself before one, "invisible yet dimly seen" in the light of the waning moon ? So I stayed on deck to wait and watch, and wonder at these same Japanese passengers, now dressed for the shore. Of course I had seen Japanese in plenty, both in Europe and America, of a higher class than these poor coolies, but the effect so far had not been impressive ; the funny little figures dressed in dubiously fitting black clothes, their brush-like hair crowned with some awful bowler, had left one's æsthetic sensibilities all unmoved. But now the Japanese dress had worked a change as of some magic wand, and I began to wonder if these picturesque and graceful figures were really coolies at all, and not perhaps daimyos reduced by the Revolution and no longer able to afford gorgeous armour and golden horns. So the night wore on, till at last we cast anchor amidst a bewildering multitude of lights, and seeing nothing at the moment more interesting to do, I went, like ordinary mortals not on the point of seeing Japan, to bed.

A grey and misty morning it was that met us when we

came on deck again ; grey sea and grey sky, a long line of grey buildings in front, and all the background hidden by the mist. European buildings one and all ; European, too, the puffing steam launches from the hotels. But not so the other craft which crowded round innumerable—long, flat boats of grey, unpainted wood, crowded by such figures as never I had seen before on sea or land. Some few were indeed in the long graceful kimono I had been admiring last night, but more were in a costume quite new to all my conceptions—short pinafore-like garments of dark blue, with huge red and white hiero-



COOLIE IN COMPLETE COSTUME. (RUINS OF ORIENTAL HOTEL, YOKOHAMA.)

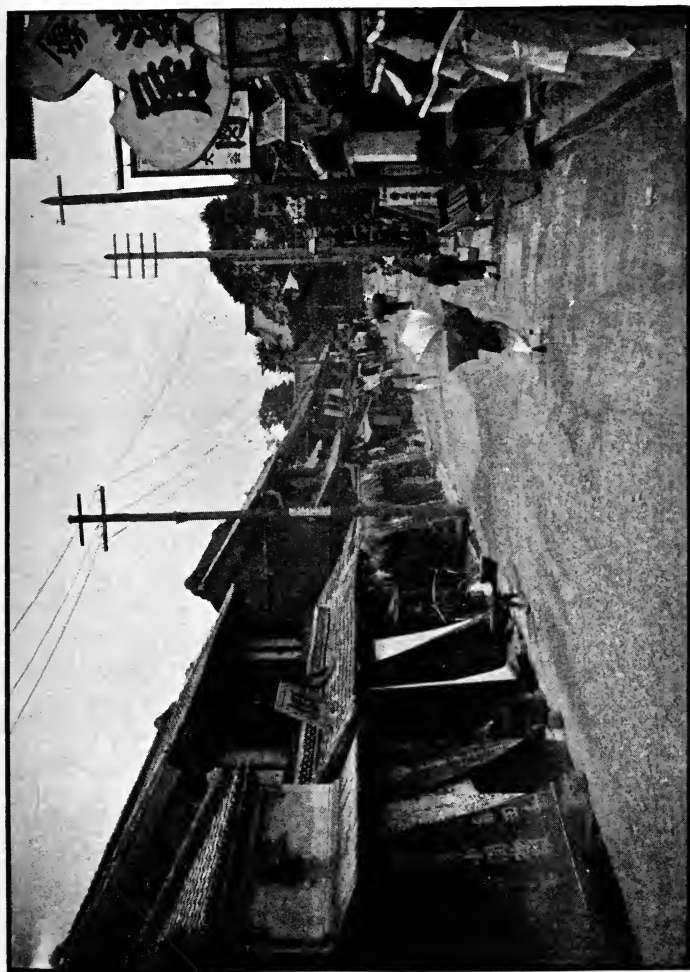
glyphics on the back, giving them a curiously heraldic look—bare-legged, these figures, and bare-headed, unless for a blue and white cloth tied tightly round the brow. Others still, and these numerous enough, were attired in all simplicity in very little more than sun-bronzed skin—apparitions which quite set at rest the fears which up to this moment had beset me as to the universal prevalence of “European costume.” These were not my old friends the quaintly gorgeous folk of the teacups, but still they were distinctly not European, and my hopes of the picturesque revived accordingly.

R——, who had just arrived from India, joined me on

board, and then we went ashore, through the quite European custom-house to the quite American hotel. "Japan is certainly not here," I thought—truly enough. Yet after all it was not far off; some of it, in the form of our rickshaws, was waiting already at the hotel door, and we got into them with unaccustomed feet and a disagreeable feeling that surely everybody must be looking at us going thus absurdly in perambulators through the public streets under the broad light of day—streets lined, too, with solid European buildings and shops of familiar type. Suddenly we crossed a muddy creek by a hideous iron bridge; and where were Europe and America then? Surely that dirty canal must be wider than the great Pacific, for at the hotel one was still in America, but crossing it one was unmistakably in Japan. A long, downhill street, with curious low wooden houses on each side, each with its grey tiled roof and long, narrow, hanging signs, bearing in enigmatic characters who knows what—advertisement, trade, or owner's name. I could not tell; to me it was all a mere wonder of purely decorative effect. All these little houses seemed to stand confidently open to the street; no windows, no doors that I could see—everything open to view like the front of a doll's house. On the ground floor, raised apparently in all of them a few feet above the earth, sat in the front room, which seemed in every case to be a shop, two or three long-robed blue figures, squatting flat among their wares, all smiling pleasantly and chatting to each other. In the street, under the long rows of telegraph poles in which I recognised young Japan, were crowds of little people, grown men whose heads barely reached my shoulder and women smaller still, both very often with a baby's head projecting recklessly, as it seemed, from the back of the wearer's neck. How these babies are put on I propose to find out later on; at present one can but wonder and admire. Everybody was smiling, everybody quiet, and, as it seemed to me, nearly everybody bowing. The greater number seemed to be acquainted with one another, and we watched them as they stopped to speak, with smiles and

bows, each standing sideways to the other instead of facing—each furtively watching to see when the other would leave off bowing. For all the crowded street, there was no noise, no jostling, no distressful whistling, no shouting; they were all poor folks to judge by appearance, yet all were walking with an air of dignity and unassuming self-respect; the whole scene astounding to eyes and ears accustomed to the jostling hubbub, to the shop-assistant and the street Arab of the cities of the West. Everywhere there opened on either hand vistas of what to all appearance was exactly the same street, some broader, some narrower, some bordered by a rather dubious-looking creek, some not, but all essentially the same; the same people, the same telegraph poles and willow trees, the same shops gently selling the same enigmatic eatables, the same narrow widths of blue and grey material, the same dainty household utensils of earthenware, the same less attractive hardware commodities too obviously made in Germany. One was so hopelessly like another that we began to wonder how we should ever in the days to come find our way about any Japanese town, especially in the absence of any possibility of reading any names, assuming that they were written up. Yet this is only Yokohama, a treaty port, and said to be the most Europeanised of them all.

Since I have been here I have, of course, been much in contact with the West—Western acquaintances, Western houses, shops, streets. Yet, for all that, it was not very long before it dawned upon me that the much talked of Europeanisation of Japan has been, as it were, a mechanical rather than a chemical process, at least if Yokohama may be taken as a sample of the country at large. The two streams, where they co-exist at all, seem to flow side by side, like oil and wine—each remains distinct. The new may overlay and even hide the old, but that which lies beneath persists undiminished, practically unchanged, ready on any disturbance to come to light. Here, side by side with the busy settlement of Western commerce, goes on the quiet native life of Japan,



STREET IN YOKOHAMA LEADING TO ZOTOKUIN TEMPLE.



little modified, outwardly at least, by whatever influence, perhaps none of the best, that contact may have had upon the deeper things of character or thought. The telegraph may run overhead, but the houses beneath are not other than they were in the days of the Shogunate; within a stone's throw of the big foreign hotel there is a Buddhist temple, and not far from the railway station you may find a Shinto shrine.

To-day, for instance, has been a public festival, or "matsuri"—some immemorial observance of the ancient faith of the country, with its worship of the powers of Nature and the spirits of the mighty dead, now stamped with the hall-mark of the new constitution, and issued afresh as a sort of Far Eastern bank holiday. All day the native town has been gay with flags, white with the red disk of the rising sun—the national "Hi no maru"—now the equal at least of the Union Jack—crossed for the most part in pairs above the gates in the bamboo fences which surround most houses which are not shops. After sundown on such a day as this you may see the streets fill with crowds of holiday-making families, all dressed in their best—the soft greys and blues of the fathers and mothers relieved by the butterfly tints of the children—all gently shuffling along in their straw or wooden sandals between the rows of street stalls, mostly full of flowers in pots, looking in at the sweet-stuff shops and simple peep-shows which line the streets; all quietness and good-humour, no children crying, no voices raised in coarse abuse or coarser merriment. Everywhere, on each side and overhead, are paper lanterns glowing against the dark, transparent sky; many of them the "Hi no maru" of the daytime over again—white with the disk of red—many, too, bearing a mysterious device like three commas, or perhaps tadpoles, twisting themselves round the inside of a circle, a device whose meaning is not too clear, I believe, even to the learned, but of which I have discovered at least the name—"mitsu tomoe." Mitsu means three, but the other word does not lend itself easily to translation—it is the tadpole-like figure in question. Other lanterns, too, there are, of every colour and form,

all combining to shed a strange glamour of unreality over the quaint, softly moving scene.

Or else, perhaps, it may be a festival of another sort, such as we saw a few days ago—some holy day of that mysterious faith whose spell is broken nowadays, they say, and young Japan will have none of it, yet which I begin to suspect is a force to be reckoned with even now among the great masses of the people unversed in the new learning. On such a night as this one may go to the great temple of Zotokuin, so conspicuous with its heavy sweeping roof and mighty trees above the native town. Deserted as a rule by day except by young girls and children playing on its steps, to-night the temple is lighted up with paper lanterns innumerable, and its courts echo with the ceaseless sound of wooden clogs. For to-night is the festival of Yakushi, the Nyorai, whose image is guarded here. No common image this, we learn, but one made by the venerable hands of the famous Prince Shotoku, which no less than thirteen centuries ago he carved, and offered it to Yakushi with a prayer for the Divine protection. When the prince had made an end of praying, the image departed from him in a cloud of glory, and, disappearing into the sea, was seen by him no more; but when two hundred years had nearly passed a strange column of light was seen by the peasants' wondering eyes hanging nightly over the waters of the bay, till at last one fisherman, bolder than his fellows, took his boat to the place whence the radiance shone, and there beneath the waters he found the image of Yakushi, carved of old by the pious prince's hands.

One after another the worshippers come up in endless succession, women and girls for the most part. Each casts into the alms chest outside a copper coin of infinitesimal value, and used, I perceive, like the threepenny piece of one's youth, chiefly in the service of Heaven; each rings one of the great gongs above the door, and with gracefully bent head prays audibly for perhaps five seconds, or till some companion comes up to whisper something apparently amusing in the ear. To me watching it seems strange to see the little figure remain, still with clasped

hands and reverently bent head, and answer back, and then perhaps go on with the prayer, perhaps seem to forget all about it and turn away with a ripple of gentle laughter with the friend, leaving Heaven, as far as one can see, to make the best of it.

Yesterday there was a grand fête in the public garden and I was there to see. It was slightly nondescript in character, but on the whole more like a garden party than anything else. All Yokohama seemed to be present, in great good-humour with itself and in every kind of possible—in a few cases of impossible—costume. It has always seemed to me since I came here that a good deal of nonsense is talked and written about the absurdities of the Japanese in their attempts to clothe themselves in the garments of the West. As a rule those whom I have seen so far wearing European dress have done so quite correctly; however disastrously unbecoming the result may be from an artistic point of view, there is rarely anything more absurd to be seen than the common, and certainly very horrible, sight of a “bowler,” apparently straight from Whitechapel, on the head of a figure otherwise attractive in its own graceful and dignified dress—or, if not a bowler, perhaps a very wide-brimmed sailor hat, no less incongruous if a little less hideous. But to-day the reins seem to have been thrown on the neck of Fancy. Snow-white “tabi” (the sort of foot-glove of strong white cotton which is always worn with every kind of sandal), above them perhaps a kimono of cotton or fine silk in soft grey or brown, and sometimes—very often indeed—beautiful silk “hakama” (wide trousers, or rather a sort of divided skirt pleated like a kilt), a garment which is more full dress than the kimono worn alone. So far, so good, but above this our troubles begin. A white sweater and black swallow-tailed coat, with collar or not *à discrétion* or a morning coat and coloured shirt, or a white dinner jacket or black evening coat with coloured tweed trousers—all these and others like unto them were combinations much in favour with the advanced idea of festive Yokohama. Every kind of hat might be seen crowning these creations of the mind;

when or where some of them can first have seen the light is to me a problem wholly insoluble. They can never have been made in Japan, one would fondly believe; surely this land of beauty can never have brought forth these things of dread; even all-producing Germany, I should think, can hardly be guilty of them. They clearly belong to the domain of the prehistoric and the supernatural, and are probably to be referred to the myths of the "Kojiki." Some figures, again, were quite correct in foreign evening dress; others no less so in morning costume (it was then about six o'clock, so I suppose there was an element of doubt as to how the time of the entertainment was to be properly regarded). Many, however, were in real Japanese dress without any foreign improvements at all, and these looked like gentlemen—princes indeed—among the rest.

" Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us "

might well be added to the list of national petitions. Surely among the eight hundred myriads of divinities that sway the destinies of Great Japan there must be some single one to answer such a petition—some deity of good taste to save his people from themselves. There is a goddess, however, who does this for her own sex, and does it well; the ladies present were all pictures—old and young alike were models of dignity and grace and charm. Probably—or rather certainly—those whom one sees going about here in Yokohama are not people of any great distinction, but no one looks like anything but a lady—not one but would do herself credit if she were a duchess. For they were all in Japanese dress: the old in soft greys and browns—vague neutral tints; the young in pale green, lilac, grey, pink—garments full of beauty in the delicate contrasting of their colours and the gracefulness of their cut.

The refreshments served in the marquee were in foreign style, and some diversity of view seemed to prevail among the guests on the subject of etiquette.

Not a few, following the native custom of taking some of the eatables home, were clearly at a loss how to do it, seeing that no suitable receptacle was provided. But here the top hat of civilisation came to the rescue, and proved itself useful if not ornamental, for I observed more than one case in which the dainties in question found their way into it in the end. One rather wondered in what state they would reach their destination, for a summer evening in Yokohama is nothing if not hot.

Outside were booths of all kinds, shows of all kinds, and a grand display of fireworks with a big crowd surging round, all intent on enjoying themselves and seeing the fun. R—— and I joined the crowd with great enthusiasm, for we were quite as keen to see the sights as they could be. What! I suppose you will think—join a bank-holiday crowd and stand among them from choice? Deliberately choose to go among foul odours and language at least inelegant, horse-play, shoving, shouting, yelling, skylarking? Nothing of the sort; this was not an Anglo-Saxon crowd. Nobody is unwashed in a Japanese crowd, nobody pushes or is rude; there no abusive language—so at least I am told. I do not pretend to make this statement on my own authority for obvious reasons, but one can at least perceive for one's self that everybody is clean, everybody sober, and everybody excruciatingly polite. Everybody wishes to see what is going on, but nobody seems to wish to interfere with other people's doing the same; nobody pushes in front of anybody else, and there is no larking. Everybody seemed quite serious, but everybody was none the less continually smiling, laughing low and musically, talking quietly, and, above all, bowing as low as the crowding would permit. We saw groups of tiny children, perhaps four or five together, the older ones for the most part with babies on their backs, all looking on at the fun in peace and safety, knowing well, evidently, that no one would bully them or push them aside. There is really nothing, I should say, for a policeman to do in such a crowd. We certainly saw a good many of them to-day, but their duty seemed to

consist in looking on at the fun and enjoying themselves like everybody else.

So we went about for hours, gazing at the strange scene, sometimes on foot, sometimes in rickshaws—the rickshaw men, by the way, taking their share of the fun at least as much as other people, standing and looking on, laughing and talking to their friends in the crowd, and making their way slowly along with all the good-humour in the world. So the night deepened; the wonderful things in the air—flying dragons with outstretched wings, and all kinds of other marvels—changed to glowing fire; stars and rockets and golden rain filled the sky with their less unfamiliar glories. The streets now ceased to be streets at all; they changed themselves into long lines of swaying fire instead, glowing white and red and pink down the long, straight thoroughfares till the lines of light seemed to converge in shining points, and all the muddy creeks shone transfigured in their radiance. Up and down the people went in the soft bright light of the lanterns, doing nothing particular—just walking and talking, with much rippling of laughter and clattering of sandals, looking in at the shops, perhaps buying a new toy for a little one here, trying their hands at a tiny shooting gallery there, sometimes with an air gun, as often as not with a bow and arrows (all, I suppose, for the tenth part of a farthing), all absolutely sober. How long the rejoicings lasted we never knew; it was near midnight when we went home to bed, but still we seemed to be the only people to whom any such idea had presented itself.

We are back now in Yokohama, after a trip to the Hokkaido, and I see now even more plainly than I did when we were here before that there is a good deal to be seen here that is Japanese, treaty port though it be. Not, indeed, the Japan of old—that is everywhere gone beyond recall—but the real Japan of the present day nevertheless, just as it exists anywhere else in the country. Yet even of that old Japan thus dead and gone, some traces are left here to show the curious what

the deceased may have been like—a shrine it may be, or a torii erected to some god or hero on a spot consecrated by some great deed, perhaps by some fairy tale of old. Here one may find a sacred grove, there a temple to some deity half forgotten in this busy age of innovation, yet still, it may be, revered by the simple folk who dwell around the shrine—toilers in the rice-fields or the sea, these two immemorial taskmasters who in all ages have never ceased to exact their tribute of toil and tears from the peasant of Japan. Even from up-to-date Yokohama one need walk but a short distance on a summer's day through the rice-fields stretching between the green heights and the sea to find such an one—the Juniten, for instance, a little shrine of ancient days on a point jutting sharply out into the bay. Here is kept another image—a Shinto deity this time—which appeared from the sea to humble fisher folks, and was enshrined by them with pious care for the veneration of future ages. What measure of religious awe this shrine and its old-world divinity may inspire in these days we may wonder vaguely, but can never know; no task so hopeless as the attempt to bridge the gulf which holds the Western and the Japanese mind far as the poles asunder on points like these; but we can at least see the village matsuri—the festival of the day of the finding of the image—and watch the mediæval boat-race, with the magic dragon horses of rushes cast into the sea by each competing boat in starting on its course.

Or again, not far from this monument of the piety of the middle ages one may find a relic of their chivalry. For close by is the Shinto shrine called Oazuma Sama, wherein is venerated no shadowy Nature-power, but the mighty Shogun Ieyasu—a man godlike enough, it may well be, in his power and wisdom in the eyes of his own generation, and many an one after, yet very human too—who before he came to the highest pinnacle of greatness had learned and suffered much. This shrine is a memento of one episode in the great lawgiver's life. Its story tells how one day a tired warrior, flying footsore and hungry from a lost battle, came to a poor farmer's cottage to ask

for a little food. The farmer gave of such poor fare as he had, and the samurai gladly ate the coarse millet cakes, and asked his host, with many thanks for his entertainment, what manner of cakes they were which he had found so good. But the farmer in hot anger rebuked him for the question. "For," said he, "it is by the endless wars and bloodshed caused by you and by your like that our fields are ravaged and laid waste, and we must perforce live on this hard fare whereof our oppressors know not even the name. But now you may see something of the miseries your wars bring on the land." The samurai, no whit offended, thanked the farmer with a low bow, saying he was no less indebted to him for the rebuke than for the food, and so went his way. But afterwards, when the weary soldier had become the all-powerful Shogun, who held Japan in the hollow of his hand and gave it peace, the farmer made an image of that tired warrior who came to him, and when Ieyasu, the friend and helper of all husbandmen, was numbered with the Kami, he built for it a holy shrine, which stands here to this day; and still on the seventeenth day of certain months a festival is held, and millet cakes are offered up, and the young men contend in feats of strength before the shrine.

Or again, one of the most ordinary excursions will bring one to a place of ancient sanctity, no less popular now than of old, still resorted to by thousands who go there to have a picnic or to bathe, in any case to have a day's outing of gentle amusement, with, perhaps, a little piety thrown in too. For the gods are not kept out of quite secular merrymakings here in Japan, and they show their appreciation by not insisting too rigidly on a monopoly of the worshipper's time and attention when the festival is of a professedly religious nature. I, of course, have been to Enoshima, like other people—lovely Enoshima, an island at high tide, a peninsula at other times, beautiful under all circumstances and at all seasons of the year; not less attractive, perhaps, in winter, when the great Pacific rollers on the beach are shadowed with deep violet, more threatening to look on than those fairy

walls of emerald and pearl that rose and fell under the summer sun.

You may be taken to Enoshima by a guide in a train, if you like, and if you are a tourist that is what you are almost sure to do. But the true plan is to go by yourself on a bicycle and lose your way. Then you will see charming visions innumerable that never show themselves from the train, and you learn incidentally how gross a fallacy is that which asserts the necessity of a road for a bicycle to travel on. For you prove experimentally that a track a few inches wide—its width regulated by a time-honoured prescription, though not so, perhaps, its innumerable hills and holes—will answer the same purpose excellently well, and, over and above the picturesque and antiquarian interest of the trip, you have the chance of falling into the very dubious black water on either side, and the excitement of steering yourself over bridges of a single plank largely gone in the middle. Then, too, if you are a new-comer, you can have the joy of airing what you probably call your Japanese. Whether this be the best way or not, in any case it was the one I chose for my first pilgrimage to Enoshima. I have come to Japan, you see, to make a stay, not merely to pass through, so I determined from the first to have nothing to do with guides, but to buy my own experience. One must buy something in Japan in either case; without a guide one buys experience, with him one buys other things more cumbersome and even more expensive in the curio shops. So off I went on my execrable hired machine, out of the dull foreign streets, out of the delightful native ones, through rather unlovely suburbs, showing the curious conceptions apparently prevailing in the native municipal mind as to the essential virtues of a road, into the rice fields, glowing under the summer sun with a colour indescribable; no English lawn in the wettest of wet Junes ever showed such a colour when the sun came out at last—such an absolutely flaring green. All the level ground hereabouts is carpeted with this colour, rising in careful little terraces each a few inches higher than the one below, all exquisitely neat, and looking as if the rice had

been planted blade by blade in a diagonal pattern. All around are hills, low but steep, enclosing the fantastically shaped, flat-bottomed valleys, every hillside clothed thickly with green, dark and light, the indispensable pine and bamboo one associates with "Japanese goods," and any amount of other foliage in addition; everywhere also tall pink-spotted lilies with sweet, heavy scent—these too, of course, correctly "Japanese." As I got on and off the road—there is a real road, but I managed to lose it rather often—I passed through tiny hamlets each more picturesque than the last.

Perhaps they are not even to be called hamlets, these little groups of some half-dozen low brown houses, sheltered by the ancient pines that line the road, each with its paper walls and its crop of tall white lilies growing not in the garden but on the roof; but whatever they are, they are certainly fascinating. So I went cheerfully on, looking at one and another of these charming things, but without any very clear idea as to the direction in which I might be going. Finally I made up my mind to ask, and going up to a peasant clothed—to some extent—in dark blue cotton, and making an elegant Japanese salutation, I asked him the way out of the guide-book with admirable fluency but no particular result. For the peasant's answer occupied about five minutes, and contained, as it seemed to my bewildered ears, many hundred words, not one of which conveyed any meaning to me. For, unfortunately, though you can ask questions out of the guide-book, you cannot understand the answer out of it too. So I thanked my friend effusively, also out of the book, and went my way in one of the many directions in which he had seemed to point. This sort of thing happened rather frequently, but finally I managed to get out of the rice-fields and on to the beach, not so very far, after all, from the goal. A beautiful beach it was, which stretched far away in front of me, the brilliant blue waters coming in on it in heavy rollers, towering up like walls of shining emerald as they broke on the white glittering sands. When I reached Enoshima itself I found a quaint uphill

street, full of endless shops and inns, all alive with hanging signs fluttering their usual enigmatical announcements in the soft sea breeze; sea shells to sell, mother-of-pearl, sponges, coral, all kinds of treasures of the sea, all beautiful, each in its own way, and all "honourably cheap." At the end of the street a flight of stone steps, and before the steps a torii. You know what a torii is, of course, from pictures—an arrangement of two posts leaning a little towards each other, with a third across the top of the uprights and projecting a little beyond them, while another joins the two together a little below as a sort of tie-beam. I had seen such things before, of course, by this time, and I also knew that to see one in front of any temple, no matter what the style of its architecture, is to know that temple for a Shinto one. Ages long this one belonged to fair Benten the Far Eastern Aphrodite, but now Buddhist Benten has had to give place to some goddess of Shinto, so there is a torii at the foot of the steps, which begin the long-drawn approach to the temple above. But the glory of that temple has departed—with Benten, I suppose; anyway it is not to be seen now, so I betook myself to Benten's cave, hoping that it might be rather more interesting than her former fane. For she had a cave here too—that is, a cave more or less associated with her—where of old a dragon dwelt, whose food was the little children of the village opposite. But Benten raised up the island of Enoshima, and in some way the misdoings of the dragon came to an end—how one may not exactly know, for there are several contradictory versions of the tale, and as each can point to the cave in its own confirmation it were safer to believe that all are true. After all this is not a land of strict logical consistency, and as I made my way back through the gleaming rice-fields, sinking slowly into shadow as the sunset faded from the cone of Fuji, I did not feel greatly drawn towards the higher criticism.

Then, again, quite close to Enoshima is Kamakura, now a shabby little village, once the head and centre of Great Japan. A curious site this ancient city must

have had; endless little dells or valleys running up in all directions between the steep low bluffs. All these dells were covered once, they tell us, with houses great and small, the mansions of the nobles and their feudal retainers, and the humble dwellings of the trading folk. Everywhere through the intricacies of these recesses, now so silent in their robe of glowing green, ran the tide of a busy life; once all the encircling hills gave back the hum of a great city's multitudinous sounds and the clang of weapons in a mighty army's camp. These temples, now the only life of the place, stood once as oases of quietude in the midst of the hurrying throng; for here, hard as it seems to believe it now, stood for centuries the chief city of Japan, the centre of her government and of her military power. Here were gathered together all her wealth and all her talent; all her more ardent spirits gravitated hither; hither came all her brave and adventurous youth, each man eager to try his fortune in the service of some great lord; hither too came the artist, the worker in gold or lacquer or bronze, to seek and find a market for the miracles of his patient skill. Nowadays Kamakura produces rice—that is, where it produces anything at all. Civil war and tidal waves have combined with Time to sweep all trace of the once mighty city from the land. One looks in vain for anything that may bring the vision of its glories before the mind, for all the place is bare except for a few mouldering temples, relics or descendants of the splendid fanes of palmy days, and farther on a straggling seaside village, whose inhabitants wring a toilsome living from the rice-fields or the sea—perhaps too a little from the guileless foreigner who may come here in the summer months.

One's first impression of Kamakura from the railway is of roofs, heavy, ornate, grey-tiled, their sweeping curves showing stately through the dense groves of trees which surround them—trees unfamiliar to the eye of the new-comer, to the ear probably quite old friends, for they are cryptomerias, and every book about Japan speaks with great familiarity of crypto-

merias as conspicuous in its landscapes, though they never tell one what a cryptomeria is like. Here one discovers that it is a tall—generally a very tall—tree; it is a sort of cedar, though it does not look the least like what we call a cedar at home, but is more the shape of a Wellingtonia, tapering towards the top and with a very straight stem of a beautiful purplish pinky colour. Its branches have generally a kind of curve in them like the seven-branched candlestick of the Arch of Titus, and the green grows on them in beautiful feathery bunches, heaviest at the upturning ends of the branches.

These first cryptomerias, then, of most people's experience stand sentinel in the grove which shuts off certain sacred precincts from the public highway. These are the precincts of the great temple of Hachiman—once magnificent and still beautiful. Hachiman is the god of war, you must know, a curious divinity who has little in common with man-destroying Ares or other warlike deities of Western ideas. In the first place his origin is purely human (at least so far as any Emperor of Japan is merely human—one must not be indiscreet), but in any case he was nothing but an early Mikado, son of a certain famous Empress Jingo, whose foreign policy was plainly not free from the characteristics now associated with her august name. For it was vigorous to a degree, and expansive too; so much so that she invaded Korea, the still coveted "Land of Morning Calm," for no apparent reason beyond her own divinely inspired belief in its mineral wealth. But the end justified the means in Jingo's case, for she came home victorious after many doughty deeds, having brought Korea under the sceptre of Japan. And so her son became the god of war; or rather it would be more orthodox to put the cart, as it were, before the horse, and say that all this happened because her son was, or was going to be, the god of war, for though still unborn at the time of his mother's military exploits, he was nevertheless, according to Japanese reasoning, quite obviously the cause of their

success. But his post-natal career seems hardly to have accorded with this martial beginning, for he is said to have been quite an ordinary and peaceful monarch. Perhaps it is for this reason that this temple is the home of such a number of doves, more suggestive, one might think, of golden Aphrodite than of her man-destroying lover. Another peculiarity of this divinity is that he seems to be given to changing his religion; for after turning Buddhist and remaining so for several centuries he has gone back to his original Olympus, and is now Shinto.

It is not difficult to realise how magnificent must have been the effect of this temple in the days of Kamakura's might, when its halls shone with golden altars and painted screens, and priests in gorgeous array, when its now silent courts echoed with the clang of swords and pikes as the warriors in their coats of mail came to pay their vows before the god. For Kamakura was no abode of peace, but a very camp of warring factions, as well as a centre from which the country was governed by the power of the sword, and as Hachiman must needs be propitiated by any one about to engage in any deed of war, his courts may well have been full of life and movement then. But now the doves of peace have it all their own way. You may go up the long flight of stone steps, in through the fine two-storied gateway, looking itself like a temple as it stands so proudly at the top of the stair, but you cannot get into the temple hall, though you may look in if you will take off your shoes and stand on the matted topmost step. There behind the barrier which closes it you will see that it is floored with fine white mats, and filled with the cool shadows of the afternoon and nothing else at all, except that in one place you will see a little lacquered table on which stands a wand, from whose top falls a cascade of white paper cut in some mysterious way into zigzags. Nothing else—no sign of any worship or any worshipper; the days of Hachiman's power are past, it would seem—the new Ministry of War has probably taken his place—and only memories remain. Pity we cannot ask questions concerning those memories of the wonderful tree which

stands by itself near the top of the steps. Surely this is one of the most beautiful trees in the world. Huge of girth and enormous of height, the dense foliage which clothes it was green, of course, on that June day when first I saw it, but if any one wants to know what an "icho" tree can be like let him go to Kamakura in the end of the autumn and see this tree when it is clothed, not with leaves like a common tree, but with myriads of little open fans of pure untarnished gold. To-day, after a thousand years of change in all around it, it stands unchanged; its glory no less bright this autumn than it was in the days of Kamakura's prime, when its golden fans fluttered down on helmets and breastplates and embroideries as golden as themselves. One of its memories tells of how the young Shogun Sanetomo, the last of his line, fell dead at its feet, slain in the darkness of a festival night some eight centuries ago; yet surely many a deed, some dark, it may be, as this, others bright with the chivalry of Old Japan—scenes of pomp and scenes of horror—must have been enacted before this silent witness. This tree saw Kamakura rise and fall with the dynasties that ruled it; its fans dropped year by year through the restless ages of civil war, they gilded the immovable centuries of the Great Peace, and still the tree stands undecayed. Does it marvel, I wonder, to see what it showers its gold on now?

Under the long avenue of pine-trees, now sadly thinned by time and conflagration, yet impressive in decay, stand three torii of grey stone stained by centuries of weather, and tinted with the soft hues of lichens; and at the end of the avenue is a bridge, a single arch of curious form, in the same grey time-stained stone. Ancient pines, dark and fantastic, overshadow the bridge, and below it in the late summer shines a vision of wonderful loveliness. No water is to be seen, only an expanse of huge grey-green leaves surrounding a multitude of glorious blossoms, pink and white—marvellous things like gigantic waterlilies standing on tall stalks. These are lotuses—the real sacred lotus on which Buddha sits. How beautiful they are, how exquisite their colour, how

lovely the strong curves of their great petals, each perhaps some six inches long, how grandly they lift their shining faces to the light out of the dark muddy water at their feet! "Like a lotus in the mire," says the Buddhist text, "so is the righteous man in an evil world," and seeing these one sees the meaning of that saying.

There is still something to be seen at Kamakura, vanished though the city be; the world has departed from it, but the church, so to speak, remains to some extent. So one goes to see the famous temple of Kwannon, the goddess of Mercy, called Hasedera, which stands gazing out from its wooded height upon the shore below. The foundation of this temple and the making of the famous image it enshrines are dated from the eighth century of our era, though the building which one now sees is not yet five hundred years old. We found the temple dark and gloomy, crowded with ornaments: its general air one of faded finery. Two horrid looking red figures stand on either side of the entrance; their native ugliness increased by the innumerable paper pellets which have been spat at them according to the unalluring custom of peasant devotion. Two individuals who, I suppose, were priests, sat in rather slovenly attire upon a sort of platform within, and presented me with what turned out to be a subscription list—for the restoration of the temple as I understood—in which they euphemistically asked me (in English) to "sign my name." When I had duly "signed" it the presiding genius, bowing profoundly, pronounced the usual formula, "Please come again," and made me a present of a little yellow book in English. The other then led me through a door on the left into utter darkness, muttering the while in tones of awe something of which I could only catch the word "rosoku," which I think and believe means only "candle," but the solemnity with which he pronounced it was absolutely blood-curdling. Lanterns containing candles—I suppose the candles he was talking about—hung in the darkness from the invisible roof. After they were lighted came a

creaking noise, and presently through the gloom appeared a pair of golden feet, then, as the lanterns slowly rose, the glimmer of a golden robe, all on a scale far beyond mortal stature, till the whole of a mighty form of gold gleamed before us in the darkness by the fitful light of the swaying lanterns. Perhaps the technique of this figure may not be on the highest level of Japanese art—I know nothing about that—but in its strong sincerity there is undoubtedly something very striking; uncertain as is the view one gets of it, one cannot but be impressed in spite of oneself by its majestic dignity as it gazes down so solemnly through the darkness.

We learned the history of the image and its temple from the little yellow book, where it was set out at great length in funny Japanese English. Its story, more shortly, was something like this. It told how, early in the eighth century of our era, the original temple was erected by the reigning Empress Gensho, and the reason for her Majesty's building it was this: In her reign there had been born into the world a certain Buddhist saint, which honourable person was called the priest Tokudo Shonin. Now at the place called Hase, in the far-off province of Yamato, there was a wonderful tree which had fallen on the ground, and the tree gave forth sweet fragrance at all times, and at night it glowed with a bright and shining light. And the holy priest Tokudo heard of this, and full of wonder he journeyed to the spot, and found the tree was one of camphor wood. And in his heart he formed the pious wish to carve therefrom an image of Kwannon the Merciful, and set it up for ever. So he solemnly recited passages from the sacred books and offered up earnest prayers that his desire might be fulfilled. And as the saint ended his prayer two men of venerable aspect appeared suddenly before him. "Reverend sir," said the venerable men, "we know that you have been praying that an image of Kwannon may be made with this sacred tree. That image we will carve for you." And the saint with joyful heart asked the two venerable men their names, and they told him how they were called, and said they were makers of sacred images by

trade, but of the place they came from they said nothing. So they set to work : and they cut the tree into halves, and made therefrom two statues, both alike in every way, and each of the height of twenty cubits and more. And this they did in no more than three days. And Tokudo the saint, full of amazement at all that was done, began to marvel who these old men might be, and at last he besought them to tell him their true names. And they answered and said, " Of a truth we are no other than Tensho-ko-Daijin and Kasuga-Daijin, who, hearing your prayers for an image of Kwannon, have come hither to grant it." And as they thus answered him a cloud enveloped them and they disappeared from human sight. And Tokudo fell down and worshipped, for he was greatly astonished. (It was not without reason certainly that he marvelled, for Tensho-ko-Daijin is none other than Amaterasu-o-mi-Kami, the Shinto goddess of the Sun, who had thus been making an image of the Buddhist Kwannon, and Kasuga-Daijin is a Shinto deity also—but these were the days of the reconciliation of the two faiths, and this kind act of theirs came doubtless as a timely sign that the new religion was not displeasing to the ancient gods.) And the tales of these marvels spread far and wide, and reached even to the sacred ears of the Mikado. And she commanded and sent one of her greatest nobles to Hase to arrange for the consecration of the image and the making of the sacred offerings. And after the holy rites were done, the Abbot who had officiated turned to the two statues and spoke to them, saying, " Thou who wast carved from the part of the tree nearest the roots, deign to dwell here for ever. Thou who wast carved from the topmost part, do thou depart whither thy deity draws thee." And he cast that image into the sea. When sixteen years had passed away a light like the rising sun was seen in the sea off a village called Nagamura, in the province of Sagami, and the poor fisherfolk found the image of Kwannon the Merciful, over twenty cubits high and floating in the water. So they drew it to land, and raised over it a shed of rushes. And again the news reached the Dragon

Throne, and again the Empress sent the great lord whom she had sent before, and commanded that a temple should be built there. And Tokudo Shonin became its first Abbot, and ever after it was esteemed holy from generation to generation, and one Mikado after another honoured it and showed it favour, and three centuries ago the great prince Ieyasu endowed it with rich lands, now lost again in the changes of a transitory world. Such is the official story of Hasedera and the great golden Kwannon as I learnt it at the time of my first visit. Information gained later reveals some confusion as to the length of the Empress's reign and other minor matters, but in the presence of so many marvels such inquiries are perhaps superfluous.

Other temples there are here also besides this—like it once great and beautiful, and like it falling into decay. In Europe a building which was in no way remarkable when new may stand venerable and impressive to the eye after a very few centuries of time and storm have added to it the dignity of apparent age. But here in Japan the dainty carving, the harmonious colour, and rich gilding have to be continually renewed if the old age of the building is to be respectable, not to say venerable. Otherwise the inevitable suggestion of these wooden temples, at once majestic and dainty in their gorgeous youth, is of nothing else than some tipsy old woman arrayed in the tattered finery of long ago. And these Kamakura temples, so long neglected, have not altogether escaped this doom. Yet they are so very old, so very long left uncared for, that their original glow of colour is almost quite gone, and the stage of draggled finery is nearly over with them, and giving place to the dark browns and greens with which the kindly hand of Nature is veiling their decay. Nor, indeed, could the suggestion of disreputableness ever be very prominent in a building so guarded and shadowed by the majesty of its surrounding trees as is, for example, the ancient temple called Kenchoji, once the most great and famous among the many temples of Kamakura's prime. Here temples and grounds alike seem neglected enough; yet perhaps

they may be more impressive to-day in their gloomy solitude than they were when they were better kept and full of laughing crowds. Huge pines and camphor laurels, cryptomerias, and many other trees of kinds unknown to me enfold one in their dark shadows as one makes one's way to the mouldering temple that they guard. Inside is the same look of vanished splendour that pervades the rest of the place. Over nearly every temple gate is written on an oblong tablet something that one cannot read, but whatever it may in each case actually be, one word might very well translate them all, "Ichabod"—"The glory has departed." Here one sees the great image of the compassionate deity Jizo, the helper of all in trouble, and more especially of little children, carved of old by the chisel of a famous monk and kept here together with a whole multitude of smaller images of the same kindly power.

Then there is the crumbling little temple of Ennoji, containing a famous image of no less a personage than Emma, the Lord of Hell; an image certainly unique, seeing that it was carved from the life. For it fell to the lot of a certain famous maker of images to die like other men, and descending to the world below, he was brought before this Japanese Pluto. And the deity sent him back to the earth to carve an image of himself and make known his terrors to the sons of men. "For," said he, "thou hast carved many images of me in life, but never a true one. Now, therefore, that thou hast seen my face, return and show me as I am." So the sculptor came back to the light of day and carved this image from the memory of that awful vision seen in the world of shades. And as I, too, gaze upon the face of Emma, I can imagine that it was with no unwilling feet that the artist turned back to the world he had left, all its sins and sorrows notwithstanding.

Many another ancient shrine one sees—all dark and lonely, all shadowed by solemn groves of trees, all containing images of more or less renown. I am, of course, in a frame of mind respectfully disposed towards the art of Japan, about which all persons of culture are in duty



THE GOD OF THUNDER.



bound to rave; indeed, I am well on my way to enthusiasm on the subject of its architecture, for the grace of its heavy curving roofs, if nothing else, has captivated my imagination; but I must confess that before attaining to full appreciation of Japanese sculpture—at least, as represented by these temple statues—I have still much to learn, or unlearn. To eyes accustomed to the bright, immortal grace of the deities of Hellas these lumpy forms make no very pleasing appeal, and they lack no less the mysterious spell cast upon the mind by the immovable majesty of the gods of Egypt, as they gaze so solemnly across the ages, superior to emotion as to Time. These uncouth wooden forms, ghastly in their crumbling paint of red and green and blue, seem to me little less than monstrous in their effort to express power by the exaggerated modelling of their ungainly limbs and the horrible contortions of their unlovely features; for me their symbolism is, for the present at least, wholly obscured by their material form, and I have to own to turning with relief from the beauties of ecclesiastical art to those of the fair landscape without.

Nevertheless, my final impression on that first day at Kamakura was of something wholly different. For after seeing these things, be they monstrous or not, I went to see another statue, greatest and most famous in Japan, the great Buddha of Kamakura. What I found after some searching was a long approach, not exactly an avenue, though shadowed on either side by fantastic forms of ancient storm-tossed pines, the rays of the evening sun falling through their branches touching the bright green grass beneath with patches of flaming light. At the end of this vista, on a broad stone platform, one sees Buddha as he sits in endless representations, immovable upon his lotus, exposed to sun and rain and storm, save for the shadowing pines that rise on either side. Before him stands an altar with two mighty lotus plants upon it, and two huge lanterns, all alike of bronze, changed by time and weather to the same beautiful blue-green colour as the statue itself. Except these there are no ornaments, no paraphernalia

at all; the great Buddha sits alone as he has sat through the five long centuries since the tidal wave carried away the temple that once sheltered him. The guide books give the details concerning the statue, its casting, its size, and so forth, and endless descriptions of it have been written. But will any description, or even any



DAIBUTSU AT KAMAKURA.

(From a photograph.)

photograph, ever convey any idea of its strangely powerful sentiment?

What is it about this thing which brings so vivid a sense of total abstraction before the mind? The face is, in fact, rather lumpy, there is little modelling about it, and what there is is horribly incorrect; the hair is a mere conventional series of round bosses, suggesting something between a barrister's wig and a nigger's wool; the proportions of the figure are wholly impossible. Yet from

head to foot it is alive with profoundest suggestion. It is not the face with its half-closed eyes, not the figure with its curiously expressive droop, nor yet the placid hands with their wonderful suggestion of repose. It is no one of these, but whatever its secret there it stands an eternal witness to the living faith of the age which could give it birth, and to the undying force of that idea which underlies all the multitudinous forms under which the creed of the Buddha presents itself to the world to-day.

* * * * *

All that I said to you after our first visit to Kamakura long ago about its extreme desolation and extinction remains, of course, quite true; but one discovers afterwards that, looked at in the light of the nation's history, there are, perhaps, not many places in Japan which have an interest surpassing that of this vanished city's site. For Kamakura is closely associated with—owes, in fact, its existence to—that curious tendency in virtue of which the history of Japan differs from that of any other civilised nation (at least so far as I know)—the principle, that is, of a dual government in which all the power was vested in one person and all the dignity in another; in which the functions of government were so remote from the sovereign as to give to European observers the idea of the actual existence of two Emperors in the country—the one “temporal,” as they expressed it, and the other “spiritual.” This principle, which has given so singular a character alike to the institutions and to the history of Japan, may be seen in operation at the very beginnings of the nation's life; in early times doubtless only in practice, though afterwards also in theory, and its formal repudiation is an event fresh in the memories of people still in middle life. With this theory of government, now no less vanished than itself, Kamakura is intimately associated, and since it was this which made Old Japan unique among the nations of the earth, and inasmuch as everything there even now that is not imported from abroad has grown up under it, it certainly adds not a

little to the interest of the scanty vestiges of Kamakura's life if one considers that it was through the development of this principle that a great city arose here to cover the rice-fields with her streets, and that it was through the abuse of it that that same city came down again to nothingness and the rice-fields got back their own once more.

Even before the rosy mists of the divine dawn have vanished from the Japanese earth the profanely curious eye may discover traces of the tendency in question. Even when, about the first century of our era, the supernatural element disappears from Japanese history, divinity did very literally "hedge the king." It was more and more felt to be unfitting that one so sacred should be occupied with the drudgery of government; a holy state of semi-seclusion was obviously more fitting for the descendant of the gods than any contact with common clay, and to play on the august lute and perhaps compose divine poetry was clearly less sullyng to these celestial hands than the sordid details of administration. None saw this with more keenly reverent eyes than a family also of unearthly, though less exalted origin, which from its first appearance in history has been in no wise averse from taking part in the mundane task of government, and which in the seventh century had exchanged the name of its divine founder for the earthly, if romantic, one of Fujiwara or "wistaria field." This family, who lived at the capital (at that time a constantly shifting one), relieved the Emperor by degrees of even the semblance of government by making all the offices of state their own and by taking care that the partners of the Imperial throne should always be daughters of their house. Military achievement seems not to have been their forte, and as time went on it became the regular thing for all the offices of state to be held by the Fujiwara, in whose hands the Emperors themselves were but puppets, while military affairs were relegated to certain families of the warlike caste which the disturbed state of the country had called into existence. The first of these families to come into prominence was that of the Taira,

sprung from a Mikado of the eighth century, and soon after them there arose the other great military family of Minamoto, descended from the Emperor Seiwa, who reigned in the century following, and whose son Tadzumi founded this family which, from that time down to the latter part of the nineteenth century, has remained in the forefront of Japanese history. That history for several centuries is nothing but a chronicle of the rivalry of these two families, and episodes in this long struggle of the red and white ensigns have always been favourite subjects in Japanese art. At last the famous sea fight of Dan-no-ura ended the struggle in the twelfth century, and nothing was left of the Taira but the sad ghosts which flit even now, they say, over that scene of blood, and wail around the monument which stands amidst the whirling eddies of Shimonoseki hard by the batteries of new Japan, in memory of the child Mikado who perished in the waters on that dreadful day. This victory and the exploits of his brother Yoshitsune, the favourite national hero of Japan, secured all power to the famous Yoritomo, the first of the Shoguns, whose strong rule brought so many blessings to his country that his faults—even his ungrateful treatment of the heroic Yoshitsune—are overlooked by posterity, and his memorial tablet is enshrined to this day amidst all the glories of Nikko. But the power slipped from the hands of his feebler descendants into those of deputies, till at last the government of Japan was to be sought in a series of delegations rather suggestive of the "House that Jack built"; the country was ruled by ministers who were supposed to rule in the name of the Regent, who was supposed to rule in the name of the Shogun, who was supposed to rule in the name of the Mikado, who was supposed to rule in the name of Heaven. But in the fourteenth century the Regent's power was crushed by certain loyal supporters of the Mikado whose names are venerated by all good patriots to this day. They gave Kamakura to the flames, and in a short time after their victorious entrance nothing remained of it but its ashes. It never regained its ancient glory—never, indeed, was more than partially

rebuilt. For it was stained not only by the cruelty and grinding tyranny of the Regents, but also by what has ever been the greatest of all crimes in Japanese eyes—disloyalty to the heaven-descended Emperor. So the flames destroyed the famous city, and we see its abandoned site to-day as it lies in melancholy oblivion, with nothing to guard the memory of its famous past save the silent temples, themselves all too plainly sinking away towards the land where all things are forgotten.



NEAR SHIMONOSEKI.



FISHING BOATS IN INLAND SEA.

CHAPTER II

TRAVELLING IN JAPAN

I HAVE just received your letter asking me what travelling is like in this country, and whether any great difficulties and hardships are likely to stare you in the face if you make up your mind to come out here. Well, I do not really think the dangers are very appalling. One can go to a great many places by train, though not, as you suggest, to all. There is a railway running the whole length of the country from north to south, and a good many branch lines as well. A Japanese railway journey is not really very different from the same experience in Europe or America; in some ways it is pleasanter, in others less pleasant; in every way certainly more amusing, because the people you travel with and the country you pass through are quite unlike anything you have ever seen there.

To begin with, there is an idyllic simplicity about the station you start from; it is usually a mere wooden shed. You give your baggage to a coolie, after duly reading the official tariff, which warns you not to give him more than two sen—about one halfpenny—for any load he can “conveniently carry,” and he, eager for that munificent wage, takes it to be checked in the appointed place. That is a process which takes about half an hour, for wonderful

things have to be written and stuck on, and moreover the charge has to be reckoned on the abacus. However, as you will have been careful to come an hour before the starting time, all is achieved in the end, and you get triumphantly into the train. If you want dignity and foreign fellow-travellers, you go "joto," or first class, which will cost you about what third would in England; if you want amusement and native company (and quite as comfortable a carriage), you go "chuto," or second, for nearly nothing. There is also "kato," or third—how low the fares for this may be I cannot imagine—but it does not look particularly inviting, and I have never had the courage to try it. The trains are very small, and the gauge looks very narrow; the carriages are open, as in America, but are fitted with one long seat down each side and a shorter one at each end. Some of the cars seem to have been made in England, some here, and some in America—there are certain signs by which you can tell which is which—and on the whole I think the native made ones are the nicest. If you go first class, you will find that the company has considerably provided you with tea, and that a little kettle and teapot are sitting funnily on the floor between the seats; if you go second, you buy it for yourself at any station, teapot and all, for a sen or two. The "honourable hot water" is generally rather cold in either case.

I never go first class myself if I can possibly help it. One hardly ever sees any but foreigners there; indeed, outside the tourist-haunted regions one generally sits in solitary state. If one goes second, one is sure to have plenty of company; the carriages are generally quite half full or more. One's fellow-passengers bring a good deal of personal luggage in with them as a rule; not merely the national bundle in a silk handkerchief, but leather Gladstones and brief bags, and barbarous things of that sort. They are very fond of rugs, too, no matter what the weather may be. They do not ever put these over their knees by any chance, but carefully fold them lengthways and sit on them, each passenger being apparently quite convinced that he is entitled to at

least three places. He sits in the middle of the rug himself, and spreads out his luggage on either side. If the carriage is crowded, and you want to sit where his impedimenta are, it never occurs to him to move them away, and if you deferentially ask permission to sit there he leaves you to lift them into the rack yourself, evidently without any idea that his politeness is not showing to the usual advantage. He generally sits for a while in European style, till, finding that too exhausting, he presently takes off his sandals, and leaving them on the floor, tucks himself up on the seat, with his heels under him, as though he were sitting on the mats at home, sometimes sideways, often with his back to society and his face to the window—fortunately, in so beautiful a country the side of the carriage is nearly all window. It is too funny, in the more remote districts, to watch and see how long they will endure sitting on the seat. If they see a foreign eye fixed on them they will suffer some time, but they always succumb in the end if the journey is long. I remember once a pretty little Japanese lady and her maid. They sat opposite to me in obvious unhappiness, till at last the maid sacrificed dignity to comfort, and hopping up on to the seat, sat there balancing herself sideways. The lady held on longer, but finally she too collapsed in the same way, and presently put one of her long sleeves over her face and went comfortably to sleep, regardless of the swinging of the train. When there is no other European in the carriage—and there hardly ever is, unless there is no first class on the train, or the person is a missionary—it is really very comfortable to do the same thing. I often take off my shoes and hop up on the seat *à la Japonaise*, so as to face the window; it makes a little variety, and it never strikes one's fellow-passengers that the position is an odd one. There is often an obvious hesitation about wearing one's sandals in a railway carriage, especially in the country districts, where the good folk are not so very up to date; they feel, I suppose, that it is a sort of room. I believe that when railways were first introduced people were always losing their shoes through

taking them off by force of habit before getting into the train, and so arriving without them.

After your neighbour has allowed you to lift his Gladstone into the rack, he usually proceeds to ask you where you have come from, where you are going, whether you are English or American, how long you have been in Japan, how old you are, have you any brothers or sisters, and other questions of the like public interest. Then, if he is of a conversational disposition, he goes on to ask if you have been in this or that place (generally Miyano-shita—they seem to think no foreigner ever wants to see anything but Miyano-shita), or even gets on to politics, at which point, unless your Japanese is much better than mine, you will say, “I do not understand your honourable remarks.” Sometimes, however, they can speak English, and then your troubles begin, for in that case they will never stop till one or the other of you has to get out of the train. A little while ago a very intelligent gentleman sat beside me for ten of the interminable hours of a journey from the ends of the earth to Tokyo, and talked without ceasing on every imaginable subject in extremely fluent English, with only a very few lapses from our normal idiom, as for instance, when he startled me by saying “Ta ta, madam,” by way of farewell when he left the train. Nobody ever gets out to go to a refreshment-room, because there are no refreshment-rooms to go to; neither are any meals served on board the train. You do not need to starve, however, for at nearly every station there are men and boys walking up and down, selling the “honourable lunch,” which they cry in a curious sing-song voice, everywhere the same. The eatables are always put up in the daintiest little oblong wooden boxes, each with a nice pair of new chopsticks fixed to the lid. You generally buy two at thirty or forty sen the pair; one contains cold boiled rice, and the other a variety of other honourable things—dried fish, omelette, beans, and all sorts of mysteries interesting to the inquiring mind, but not very satisfying to the hungry body. When you have finished you throw the dainty little boxes, chopsticks and all, out of the window, seeing that

it is impossible to make a collection of even Japanese wooden boxes so long as one lives in a planet of limited dimensions. You can buy fruit, too, in its season; Japanese pears, for instance—greeny-brown globular things full of a coarsely-granulated substance tasting of nothing on this earth but water, and perhaps wood—grapes, oranges, persimmons, apples—these last excellent in the north. There are several kinds of “kaki,” otherwise persimmon; the nicest is as big and round and yellow as an orange, with a shiny golden skin, and full of a luscious pulp. There are also others of oval shape, less golden in colour, and guiltless of any taste at all. For drink you can buy saké, of course, but you must drink it cold (in which state it is unspeakably horrid), and also beer. There are several excellent sorts of beer made in Japan, all of the German type, but with Japanese names, such as “Kirin,” or “Ebisu,” and another very good one is made at Sapporo, in Yezo, and called by the name of that place. You cannot get better beers than these in the Fatherland itself, but alas! that even in Japan the contents of a bottle should not always correspond with the legend without. We have often had the most awful decoctions palmed off on us, bearing the unblushing label “Kirin.” There is another very good beer, which I rather hate for the way in which it defaces exquisite hillsides with its advertisements after the unabashed fashion of certain “little liver pills” at home. As you go along in the train you may see this horrid thing staring at you from the most lovely places, and it makes me so angry that I never will drink it when I can help it. Another advertisement I have got to know is that of a certain brand of cigarettes, which sins just as greatly—worse, in fact, than the beer. Wherever one goes by train one sees it glaring out in execrable evidence. One of the most lovely ranges of hills in the enchanting province of Suruga, at the very foot of Fuji itself, unblushingly faces the Pacific with this horrid legend branded in white limestone nakedness on its beautiful green front. Alas for “Western progress”! The advertising demon might surely let at least this

beautiful land alone. The only thing that in any degree saves the situation is the decorative quality of the Chinese characters themselves. If one did not know that these things were advertisements they would be almost pretty. You can buy cigarettes at the station, as well as refreshments, at from three to seven sen a packet. Everybody smokes, and all carriages are smoking-carriages. The diminutive national pipe appears to some extent, but as a rule these same cigarettes seem to be considered more correct for railway purposes—they



FUJIYAMA, THE SACRED MOUNTAIN.

have a more foreign air, I suppose. Newspapers and novels are much in evidence among native travellers also. How their eyes can stand the strain of deciphering small and badly printed Chinese characters in a jolting train I do not know ; indeed, I rather suspect it does even them no good, for one sees an extraordinary number of people in spectacles. They will read for hours together, and if they are alone, or nearly so, they have an irritating habit of doing it half aloud. The other day, for instance, I sat the whole evening in the train next to a man who was reading what seemed to be a novel by the dim religious

light of the oil lamp in the roof; he stood holding it up to the light and droning out the contents in a low monotone, as though he were reciting prayers. But the grand amusement is to talk and chatter unceasingly; everybody talking each to his neighbour just as they do on the Continent, but without the excitement and wild gesticulations which make it so amusing to watch Italians, say, or Greeks, carrying on a conversation. The Japanese chatter every bit as fast, but always quietly, and absolutely without gesticulation or signs of incipient madness; and, stranger than all, each allows the other to finish without breaking in, so that a political conversation is not necessarily a trial of lung power, as it so often is in Europe—one must not say in England, of course. If two people who happen to know each other meet in a train they stand for several minutes in the middle of the carriage, doubling themselves up in convulsions of politeness, wholly regardless of other passengers crowding past them at stations or of the swaying of the moving train. Then, when one or the other leaves off bowing, they settle down, and the grand talking-match begins. I was rather amused the other day by a little party sitting opposite to me. First, a cavalry officer in gorgeous European uniform came in, accompanied by his wife, and their little girl of about three or four years old—the wife the usual graceful apparition in silk of delicately subdued hues, the child the usual butterfly. The father took the child on his knee and talked away to her, but never addressed a word to the pretty little wife, who sat meekly by and repacked a bundle of clothes, out of which she had taken an outer garment for the child. By and by another magnificent being, in the same ill-fitting but much belaced uniform, came in. My friend jumped up as though on springs, and the two exchanged the profoundest of bows and the most affable of smiles while you might have counted a hundred. Presently they sat down, and then it occurred to No. 1 to introduce his wife. She made a low obeisance, to which No. 2, still seated, replied with a very moderate bow—for Japan—and for the rest

of the journey the two chattered together, never addressing a word to the pretty little woman who looked so charming and ladylike, and, if they had only known it, so immeasurably their superior, as they sat there with all the ugliness of their figures revealed by the attempt at tight clothing. They took off their swords and belts, and gave them to the lady to put up in the rack, which she meekly did, and then, after a while, they added to the dignity of their appearance by taking off their boots, spurs and all, and sitting in their stockinged feet while they ate the lunch they had brought with them. When they had had enough they handed over the remains to the lady to do what she could with. This sort of thing is quite usual, and does not perhaps show the civilisation of this otherwise fascinating country in the most favourable light. There is another side to the picture, nevertheless. I saw an illustration of it a short time ago, also in a train. There were amongst the passengers a man and his wife, evidently quite of the lower middle-class, respectable people with no pretensions to being anybody in particular. They had two large bundles with them, which they put in the rack, and then sat down just beneath them. The man had on a rather handsome overcoat of a sort the Japanese seem greatly to affect—a dark blue cloth garment of semi-European cut, rather like an Inverness cape, and so made that it can be worn over the native dress. This was a new and good one, with a nice fur collar, and I think my friend was rather proud of it, to judge by the careful way he sat down in it and smoothed it out. By and by something was wanted out of one of the bundles. The wife opened it, and as evil luck would have it, out fell a large bottle of milk, which broke on the edge of the rack and deluged the cherished overcoat. (I suppose it was milk, from its appearance, but they do not as a rule use milk; anyway, it was a thick, white fluid, which made a sad mess of the dark blue cloth and the fur.) Now I do believe that in Europe ninety-nine men out of a hundred in that class would have sworn at the wife, and got into a towering rage. Not so my friend, however. He lost neither his

dignity nor his temper, but simply took out a handkerchief from somewhere and wiped it off as well as he could, quietly remarking, "Shikata ga nai"—that phrase of resignation with which Japan meets all the ills of life—"It cannot be helped." Presently he laughed gently, and the wife laughed too, and the rest of the journey went by in smiles. Nobody got a laugh at his expense, and only the overcoat was the worse.

Stations are rather amusing, which is distinctly fortunate, for their name is legion. In the first place there is always the excitement of finding out the name. Not the same kind of excitement as in an English station, where you look to see the name of the place and are told instead of the surpassing merits of somebody's blacking and somebody else's soap—not that, but another no less painful. The name is indeed on every lamp—glass lamps, alas!—but in elegant Chinese characters for the most part, and though some of the announcements are considerably in "kana" this does you very little good, for even if you think you know your "Iroha" you will be at the next place before you can remember just what the very first of them stands for, and by the time you might have remembered how it sounds you have forgotten what it was, so you are not much the better for that. Nevertheless, the name may be ascertained, for it is written once in Roman letters at the very end of the platform, where the train passes it at full speed, and where it is well out of the reach of any ray of light by night. However, if one does by any chance succeed in lighting on the name, it is invariably so pretty and musical that one's wrath evaporates and one goes on hopefully looking for the next. Then, again, the crowds that come to the station are a treat to watch; such a lot of people clattering about on geta, for no apparent object—probably only to see if any one they know is on the train. If any one is being seen off then one gets a lesson in manners which fairly sets up a sympathetic ache in one's backbone—such a bowing all the time the train is standing and as it moves off. And the funny thing is that the person being bowed to does not as a rule go to the window

to return the salutation, but stands right in the middle of the carriage and bows wildly there, regardless of the presence of the other passengers, and from a position I should think almost invisible to his friends.

The train is always late, of course—never mind—it will arrive “*tadaima*.” *Tadaima* is a useful word; it is to be translated “immediately,” but corresponds, I believe, to the Spanish “*mañana*,” and means that what you are in such a hurry about really will be done before you die. “Please check my baggage; the train is just coming in.” “*Hei, tadaima*”—but nobody moves. “Please bring the breakfast; we have to catch the early train.” “*Hei, tadaima*”—but nobody even thinks of beginning to cook it. “When will there be a steamer for that island?” “*Tadaima*”—that is to say, on Saturday week. So, naturally, a few hours’ delay on the part of the train makes no difference; we shall get there “*tadaima*,” and if we are too late for everything, why, “*shikata ga nai*,” so why fuss? And accordingly we do not fuss. When we stop at a signal one does not see every head out to discover why, nor does the whole train reverberate with stamping feet and naughty words. Conversation proceeds as before, and we gaze in unruffled content at the honourable mountain or duckpond, or whatever the honourable thing may be that is in view, without any feeling that we have had enough of it.

But you need not go by train anywhere, unless you wish to do so. Where the railway goes a good road generally goes too. For instance, the so-called Tokaido railway follows more or less the line of the two splendid old highways called the Tokaido and the Nakasendo—roads once alive with busy traffic and with pomp and splendour too, as the Daimyos travelled with all their gorgeous train to and from the Shogun’s capital at Yedo; quiet and more or less deserted now, but still charming with their fairly preserved avenues of ancient pine-trees—last remnants of splendours past and gone. Suppose you want to go along either of these roads, or along any road (that is a road at all, that is to say) you can go by rickshaw, or, if you are venturesome, by “*kago*.” (This

latter way of travelling "is recommended," as the guide books say, chiefly to those whose legs and spine are made of india-rubber.) Certainly, though rickshaw travelling cannot be called luxurious, it is much the pleasantest and best way of seeing the country. It is rather tiring, however, for you simply dare not lean back; if you do, you run the risk of upsetting the whole affair, runner and all. Natives seem to recline at ease in them, but then they don't weigh what we do. So you must go along in a more or less upright position, and candour forces me to admit that though this way of getting about is otherwise delightful, a day of it is distinctly fatiguing. On the other hand, you can always get out and walk, which is a great rest; only, as a rule, the runners will resent it as a slight on their powers of dragging you, for it never enters the Japanese mind that any one would walk for the pleasure of the thing. This is quite the only drawback, otherwise it is an absolutely perfect way of travelling, if one is in no particular hurry. You get all the fresh air, no blacks or draught or noise; you can stop when or where you will, get out and admire the view, make a sketch or a photograph, gather a flower, have your lunch when the fancy takes you, make any little detour you like, and put up for the night whenever and wherever you feel drawn to do so.

One soon gets over the uncomfortable feeling that possesses one on first coming to the country—a sort of scruple about using one's "fellow-man" as a draught animal. One's fellow-man accepts the situation so cheerfully and seems so little disturbed or distressed by it that one soon falls into his view of the subject and troubles one's self no more about it. And after all you will find it very convenient to have a horse whom you can talk to and ask questions as to the places you are passing through, and who is ready and desirous to give you any amount of miscellaneous information—reliable and otherwise—as to all that you see; one who looks on, moreover, with a sympathetic interest as you take a photograph or a sketch, and is pleased and delighted if you show any sign of sharing his joy in the beauty of the scenery. I suppose

that if one takes a guide one does not converse so much with one's horse, but I never have gone anywhere with a guide; even from my first arrival I adventured myself, greatly daring, with no other protection than a few phrases learnt out of the guide book. No doubt the guides are a most admirable fraternity, but I venture to think that one gets more fun without them, even as a new-comer, for it is amazing how little Japanese will carry you through, and that little you can easily get up. Then you can go about where you like, whereas, if you have a guide, you must go where he likes, which is not always quite the same thing. I have often been much diverted by meeting tourists going whither they would not, in pathetic submission to the inevitable, in the form of a dumpy little guide with a bowler hat and a cigarette. "Why don't you go to see such and such a thing?" "Oh, we should like to immensely, but So-and-so will not hear of it." It really is quite easy to do without one if you will take the least bit of trouble. First, you learn to say, "Sukoshi mate," which means "wait a little." I do not know why everybody begins with this phrase, so obviously useless in a country where everybody is only too pleased to wait spontaneously to all eternity, but they do. Then you can go on to "Ikura?" which means "How much?" "O hayo," "Good morning"; "Sayonara," "Goodbye." Armed with these four—or with very little more—R—— and I went recklessly to Yezo soon after we first came to the country and ran into no kind of danger. However, you can please yourself when you come, of course, but hence it comes that I am unable to describe to you a rickshaw journey under the auspices of a guide, for I never made one. So we will assume that you are going without one, say along the Tokaido, or, indeed, anywhere else. You arrange to start early, warned by experience, and have ordered your rickshaws accordingly, perhaps with the same men to take you all the way, perhaps only for the day; it does not matter. You must have one rickshaw for each person and one for the luggage, of which, if you are wise there will not be much, and what there is will be packed in a kori, or in

more than one, but in any case not in a box. A kori is one of those double baskets made of rushes, at one time never seen out of Japan, but now evidently exported in large quantities, to judge by the numbers I see here which have been brought out from home and from America. One can tell them from those bought here by their being fastened with a strap of foreign manufacture instead of the thick cord which is used in this country for the purpose. You do not want a tremendous amount of clothing; there is no dressing for dinner in a Japanese inn—quite the contrary, indeed. But if you can't eat Japanese food you must take some foreign eatables with you if you want to survive the night, and if you want to be comfortable you must absolutely take pillows, and had better take sheets. They say it is a good thing to take some sheets of the oil paper of general native utility as a protection against fleas, but I cannot say I have found that so very necessary; I would much rather have something which is a protection against rats. Pillows need not be so bulky as one might think. I always take a rubber air-cushion, which takes no room at all, of course, and a small down pillow which squeezes into a very little space. One medium-sized kori will hold the entire sleeping kit for two people (as well as towels, which are things you must never forget whatever else you leave behind). Another one for foreign food, if you want it, and a third for clothes, is all that you need take. I can do quite well on Japanese food, so I never take "yo shoku"—otherwise foreign food—with me, which is a great saving of trouble, no doubt; but I should not recommend anybody to go very far without some unless they are quite sure they know what is in store for them.

So away you go through the morning streets, yet, early as it is, you see the population is all astir. The shops are all open, and everywhere you may see the maids rubbing up the polished verandah floors, which rubbing up seems to be all the housemaid's work a Japanese house requires. The floor is invariably as clean as any floor could possibly be, even before this tremendous process begins; but the head of the operator is none the less carefully tied up in

a blue and white towel to prevent the possible settling of a speck of dust on the elaborate erection beneath. For this, you see, is only perhaps Tuesday, and the coiffure may have to last till Saturday very likely, and anything like dust or untidiness meanwhile would be very distressing. Soon you get out of the long street, for you dash with much spirit through the middle of everything, steering clear of the Mikado's lieges only by a succession of miracles, and shouting "Hai, hai!" wildly as you go, for nobody seems to mind being nearly run into; all any one does is to cast a glance of mild surprise or



A COUNTRY TOWN.

curiosity at the foreigner, and keep the even tenor of his way. Almost immediately you are in the country, bowling along not quite so fast now that there is nobody to collide with. Tall trees line the road—dark and aged pines, half broken away in places by age and neglect, now and then ceasing for a while and then beginning again; rice-fields, it may be, on either side for a long time, and far away the outline of high mountains; then here and there the rice stops and you see other cultivation, then a farmhouse, shut off from the world by a high—a very high—hedge, and sheltered by its group of mingled pines and bamboos. Maple and cherry trees are there too, most

likely, but these one does not notice much save in their seasons of glory in scarlet or pink. The pine and the bamboo, the contrast of the north and the south ; the dark evergreen pine and the pale tints of perennial spring—these are what catch the eye all the year round in the normal Japanese landscape. “The pine and the bamboo green for aye.” It is the typical combination of Dai Nihon, beloved by artists, sung by poets, from immemorial time. Very typically Japanese, too, in its suggestion of verdant youth side by side with venerable antiquity—no unfitting symbol of a country where the Son of Heaven opens Parliament in person, and where you can go by train to the august shrine of his divine ancestress, the Goddess of the Sun. Then perhaps the rice begins again—a sea of living emerald if your trip is a summer one, of glittering gold if you go in autumn ; less fascinating, I will admit, in winter, when the fields lie in one great stretch of most unpleasing mud. Never without a certain interest at any time, however, for as the pine and the bamboo are among the trees, so is the rice among the crops—the crop *par excellence* of the country. A very toilsome one it is to raise. Beginning when the land is gay with the cherry blossoms of spring, the work goes on with little break till the harvest shines golden amidst the reddening tints of autumn. First the farmer levels his seed-bed and raises his little mud-wall round it, and manures the soil within. Then he leads the water within the wall by a little channel cut from some neighbouring stream, and, flooding the surface, he sows the seed broadcast on the water. There he leaves it to sink and sprout, and for the next six weeks all he need do to his seed-bed is to keep it flooded. But with the first heats of summer his real toil begins, for then is the time of the transplanting of the rice and setting out of the seedlings in the fields prepared meanwhile for its reception by levellings, and ploughings, and smoothings—all the work of human hands. Each field, when the land allows of it, is a little higher than the next, so that the irrigation water may flow from one to the other without extra toil. Where the land is too flat for terracing, one may see all sorts of primitive

contrivances for bringing in the water. Some remind me a little of what one sees in Egypt, especially the plan of lifting the water by two people swinging a basket backwards and forwards into the stream, and letting it empty itself at each swing into the irrigating channel at the side. Water-wheels, too, of every sort and shape, you may see in such places, but terracing is the usual plan, and everywhere the least rise of ground is used in this way. The transplanting is no joke—all done as it is, by hand, each seedling planted by itself by bare-legged men and women standing knee-deep in the unspeakably



GATHERING THE RICE HARVEST.

filthy mire and water, patiently stooping hour after hour of the long working day, hidden under monstrous hats which suggest the idea that the rice-field is bearing a preliminary crop of animated mushrooms.

When the transplanting is done the hardest part of the farmer's task is at an end: till the harvest comes he has nothing to do but keep his field free from weeds and supplied with water as the splendid green carpet slowly covers the land, till as the summer goes on every terraced hillside glows like a flight of emerald steps. As autumn approaches the emerald turns to gold, and with the

gathering of the harvest a woeful change comes over the landscape, and one realises how much of its beauty it owed to the growing rice. Now the fields are nothing but bare, unsightly stretches of brownish stubble, with here and there some dirty water from the summer's irrigation to add to the forlorn look of everything. The rice itself hangs up to dry in melancholy bundles, drooping from poles, from branches of trees, hedgerows, everything. The threshing, so far as I have noticed, is done by taking a bundle of straw in the hand and beating the ears against something hard, so letting the grains fall out. Often a little three-walled hut of canvass is set up in the field and the ears are beaten against the sides. The husking process seems as a rule to be rather primitive also. I have noticed a good many devices; one of the commonest is an arrangement with a beam of wood and a little stream of water, which practically goes of itself. As for the flour-making, you may see mills of varying pretensions everywhere—from the ambitious affair with actual machinery, down through various stages of wooden contrivance, to one which you may see any day in the country districts, and which is certainly free from all reproach on the score of modern innovation, consisting as it does of a long beam worked up and down with a sort of treadmill motion by two men, who generally wear a costume almost entirely of nature's providing.

After a long stretch of rice you come by and by to signs of more habitation again—perhaps a farmhouse or two standing in respectable seclusion, each behind its tall camelia hedge, remote from the highway (for the Japanese, you will observe, do not share the fondness for living immediately upon a road which distinguishes certain classes at home, nor do they turn their living-rooms to face it); then suddenly a hamlet, the pines most likely still continuing, though less thickly set—such a funny little place—a single street, or, rather not a street, for why should one use that misleading word merely because some brown toadstool-like growths alternate with the trees which line the road and seem no less

natural than they? "Come out from under that hat," said the gamin to the Eton boy; "I see your legs a-dangling." So one might say to these little brown abodes, which seem so overburdened by their heavy roofs of thatch, all innocent of chimneys, but many boasting an idyllic arrangement in the shape of a hole which is evidently meant to answer the same purpose. Each of these has its careful little garden at the back, minutely cultivated with pebbles, and decorated most likely with a sheet of ornamental water, quite eighteen inches across.



A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.

Most of these stand open to the road, and you may see all the domestic processes which are going forward within—cooking, perhaps (this, as often as not, over a precarious looking boarded square sunk among the mats, and quite unprotected), or, perhaps sewing, or washing, or both, for garments are unpicked to be washed, and they are not ironed, but the little narrow widths are stretched separately on long boards and left on them to dry, and this rather roundabout process seems to answer the same purpose. Japanese women seem to be everlastingly washing, and I

suppose that when they are not actually washing the garments they are remaking them after the wash. Fortunately very fine sewing is evidently not expected—they seem to think a quarter of an inch quite a neat and secure length for a stitch.

If you come to your hamlet at all early in the morning you will find it all alive with boys and girls pattering happily off to school, for the Education Department is nothing if not busy in Japan, and the peasant children go every one to school. I suppose most of the school-days are taken up in the effort to learn reading and writing to some moderate extent—that is, to acquire the few thousand Chinese characters necessary to enable one to get creditably through life in the lower ranks of society; also, I understand, they learn geography and Japanese history, the latter, to judge from specimens I have heard of it, wholly deserving of study as a masterpiece of contemporary fiction. Be that as it may, it is a pretty sight to see a village school break up for the dinner-hour, and the happy-looking little creatures come tumbling out, some quite big and stately, others round, toddling balls, apparently not long emerged from the snail-shell stage with which life begins in Japan, on somebody else's back. So you pass on, and leave the brown village and its laughing child-life behind; past more farmhouses, catching a glimpse on one side of the temple of the district, grey and lonely, its high, curving roof half lost amidst the branches of its encircling trees; leaving behind you here and there some tiny Shinto shrine, standing only a little aside from the road behind its torii, lonely and neglected enough, yet an object of veneration for all that. By and by you come to a wayside tea-house, and here you decide to lunch, having received a hint somewhat more than broad from your runners that they would like to do the same thing. They do not like to work on an empty stomach, and small wonder they should not; the only odd thing is how any one can do such hard work on such food as theirs. Yet it seems to suit them uncommonly well; they are healthy and well-developed, and run for an amazing time without

distress, so you need not disturb yourself on that score. They draw off a little to one side and lunch off something mysterious, while you sit down on the flat square cushion which the little waitress puts down on the red blanket which covers the raised floor, eat your lunch sitting, as it were, upon the edge of the house. If you have not brought something with you it is no use being too hungry here, for you will not find there is much to be had—rice, and perhaps beans, eggs too if you are lucky, but in any case plenty of tea and sweets. Large round white peppermint balls, soft and sweet, are a frequent delicacy in such places, and not at all bad with Japanese tea. There you stay an hour or more to rest your men, spending the whole time probably in answering questions; and then if you are making a day of it you go on again. Perhaps you may come by and by to a region where mulberry-trees, great and small, grow round you on all sides; cottages become more frequent, and presently you find yourself in a large town—a place living wholly on and for silk culture, whose most important inhabitants are not the little people you see walking about, but the silkworms, whose attendants they are. One such town I know which is quite a large place, a town of silkworms and the processes connected with them. It lies in a plain, with a barrier of great mountains behind it, surrounded by its mulberries, and cut off by them, in a sense, from the rest of the world, for the mulberry-trees represent silk, and silk is the only life of the place; beyond silk it knows nothing. There are some big filatures here; brick buildings with chimneys and machinery in correct Lancashire style, but quite devoid of Lancashire grime and repulsiveness. We have seen the inside of some of these by the kindness of their proprietors, and very interesting they are—long rooms, with machinery in motion, all working somehow from the roof by a band, after the fashion of machinery anywhere else, and all down the room rows of “hands,” funnily unlike the “hands” one sees at home. Little creatures they were, all tidy and clean in their cotton kimonos of grey or blue, their hair

tied up in the inevitable handkerchief, their little hands white and boiled-looking as they kept plunging them into the hot water in which the cocoons are kept. They sit thus all through the long, monotonous day of—I am afraid to say how many hours—I believe fourteen is not unusual, yet they seemed perfectly cheerful and contented as they sat so neatly before the machine, smiling and chatting each quietly with her neighbour, hardly looking up even at the intruding foreigners. No clattering in this mill beyond what was made by the machinery; no dirt, no loud voices raised either in merriment or in quarrelling. I think few things strike one more in this country than the contrast between its mill hands and ours. I have noticed it in every factory I have been in, notably in a certain brewery where girls were employed to label the bottles. I do not mean to suggest that Japanese mill hands are models in every respect, or even remarkable for docility; on the contrary, they are as good, or better, than ours at strikes, which fact I understand to be the cause of no little anxiety to those whose concern is for the country's future—all I mean is that they are more agreeable in their manners. In this place, again, besides the big filatures, every cottage is busy rearing worms and reeling silk on its own account, and this is far prettier to see. Every house you look into has its little hand-reeling machine, and every man, woman, and child is busied in one way or other about the silk; every cottage shows you heaps of big shining twists of it, pure white, and glistening like silver. I sadly fear these poor things get but a small profit for all their toil, for the large people, in whose hands the whole business is, buy it up from them, I believe, on very hard terms. Nothing goes to waste in this thrifty city of silkworms; even the little stream that here, as in so many other places, runs in its stone channel down each side of the main street is nowise allowed to pass idly on its way, but is made to turn a little water-wheel before each cottage door.

So the day wears on; you stop, perhaps, once or twice for tea at wayside rest-houses, one very much like another, and at last about nightfall you arrive at the place where

you are to pass the night, and trot gaily up to the door of your native inn, or "yadoya." Of course if you are used to the country there is nothing adventurous in this; but if you are a new-comer, as R—— and I were when we first made an excursion into the interior, there is a distinct element of excitement about the arrival at a native hostelry, and as you will be a new-comer too, I may as well use this past experience to let you know what is in store for you. I remember well this earliest adventure of the kind, and what our feelings were. We arrived just as it got pitch-dark at our destination, an ancient town in a lovely region of wood and water. Our inn lay on the bank of a wide and rushing river, with high wooded hills on the other side, and was once, as we learned afterwards, a rest-house for Daimyos travelling in state to and from the Shogun's Court at Yedo. Well, we arrived at the door amidst darkness made visible by a few charming but ineffectual paper lanterns, and were received by what seemed to us a quite unnecessary number of people, one of whom stood bowing before us while the rest discomposed us by remaining on their knees with their heads on the ground. We asked several questions out of the guide book as to rooms and so forth, and received answers unintelligible in proportion to their affability. However, we gathered that it was all right, and, sitting down, began to take off our shoes under at least six pairs of admiring eyes. The hall, as it were, or rather the porch of a Japanese inn, is always a small square space just inside the door, with an earthen floor sunk a few inches below the level of the surrounding wooden one. On this floor, then, we sat down with our feet on the earth, and got out of our shoes as best we could. (The grand difficulty on such occasions is to avoid putting one's stockinged feet on the bare, and often wet, earthen floor—it requires much wriggling to keep from doing this.) This feat safely accomplished, we were given the gigantic pair of carpet slippers which, according to the fixed idea of the native mind, represents the foreign conception of comfort in footgear, while our own shoes were put into one of the innumerable pigeon-holes which lined the walls

of the little entry. Next we had to try to walk, or at least to progress in some way, across the polished and very slippery floor in these same heelless slippers, apparently made for Enceladus the Titan, or somebody of that sort. One generally manages to swim along in them somehow as far as the foot of the stair, but then one's troubles begin. For the stair is nothing but a wide and very steep ladder, whose rungs are not rungs exactly, but smooth and highly polished planks. You cannot possibly lift your feet in the carpet slippers without losing them through the back of the stair, so after a few convulsive struggles you end, if you are wise, by taking them off and carrying them to the top in your hand. We fell on this plan at once, and, the summit triumphantly gained, put them furtively on again and began swimming down the slippery passage after our conductor, who kept on saying something in tones of immense enthusiasm but without conveying very much meaning to our minds. (Later experience has taught me that it was probably "Kochira ye"—"Come this way.") The passage was lighted with electricity, which was so far reassuring, but we observed with dismay that its walls consisted wholly of paper slides, and we began to remember apprehensively all the dreadful things we had read about wet fingers and peeping eyes and the general impossibility of sleep in a Japanese inn. Presently our particular slide was reached, and leaving our carpet tormenters outside, we went in. Inside we found rooms perfectly empty, but large and lofty, and of such beauty as to give us quite a false idea of the gorgeousness in store for us in our future wanderings. For these were Daimyo's rooms, with coffered ceilings and exquisite decorations in the way of painted sliding panels, ventilating friezes of dainty wood carving and gorgeously lacquered cupboard doors. One of the solid walls in each room was divided into two recesses by a small tree trunk, in one a cherry-tree with the bark on, in the other a cryptomeria very highly polished. One recess in each room held a vase with flowers and a long picture of the kind which is called "kakemono" also in England

(though with an accentuation villainously incorrect), and the other was fitted up with fanciful little cupboards made in the thickness of the wall and closed with gold lacquered sliding doors. It made me dreadfully unhappy to disfigure these fascinating rooms with anything so horribly undecorative as luggage; even a *kori* was hideously out of place amidst all these objects of art, yet there the Philistine things had to remain in dreadful evidence, for it was wholly impossible to get them into the lovely little cupboards by the *tokonoma* (which is the name of the polished recess with the *kakemono* in it). However, we were not left at leisure to bewail our misdoings very long, for what must have been quite half the staff of the inn presently found it their duty to come and assist in ascertaining our wishes and any other facts about us which might prove to be of interest. First there was the usual paper, then blissfully unfamiliar, in which all sorts of miscellaneous personal information has to be entered for the instruction of the police. Such an excitement as there was on this occasion over the due filling up of the police paper! They asked us many questions in Japanese—deferential, evidently, in the highest degree, and no less unintelligible; we gaped uncomprehending, till, finally catching one word, we looked it up in the dictionary, and discovered thereby that what they wanted was our honourable names, so we filled them up with a paint-brush in the space indicated (it is not so easy to write a small hand legibly with a paint-brush as you might think, at least not on a first attempt). Our ages next—another crux—mutual congratulation and delight when we discovered what was wanted. Then something about “Ingurisu” or “America?” We recognised these two words without the dictionary, and fluently answered “Ingurisu,” which was duly entered by our affable friend (whether head-waiter or landlord or what we had no idea). Then “Doko kara ikimasu?”—a fearful problem. The dictionary said “doko” is “where,” and “kara” is “from,” but we could not find “ikimasu” for reasons subsequently ascertained; however, thinking it must mean “come,” we boldly

answered "Yokohama," with complete success—clearly it was thought very natural that we should hail from thence. Another question appeared from analogy to mean "whither?" and we answered confidently "Hokkaido." General jubilation—everything necessary for the police had been successfully ascertained. Next, to find out what we might want ourselves. To this end a large copy-book was ceremoniously brought in, in which were written in English certain questions of general utility without answers and with no very clear indication as to who was supposed to be the speaker. We pounced on one of these and pointed to it enthusiastically. "Can you cook the foreign food?" it fondly asked; but no one seemed to be any the wiser—everybody bowed and smiled and drew in the breath with the politest of hisses, but we never got any nearer "the foreign food." Next came "How do you find Japan?" which did not seem to be the question of the moment, so we did not put it. Then, "The jinrickisha man wish see." There was some ambiguity about this, but as we had no desire at all to see the jinrickisha man, and thought that if he wished to see us he could very well wait till the morning, we omitted this observation also. The next was "It is very inconvenient," which was undoubtedly true, but it seemed superfluous, as well as rude, to mention it, so we sent the book away as on the whole a disappointing work, and began on our own account with the guide book. By its assistance we got them to understand that we did not wish to join the large and mixed party then bathing in the honourable hot-water tank below, and also that we were anxious to dispense with the services of the blind shampoer, whose melancholy whistle might even then be heard in the darkness of the street outside. Then with the aid of the same invaluable helper we contrived to get an elegant Japanese supper on the floor, and afterwards to convey to them that we should like our beds made. The supper apparatus vanished in a twinkling, and some more damsels came in with prostrations and thick silk quilts which looked like eiderdowns, but were much heavier and more substantial. When they had

sufficiently examined our clothes they proceeded to lay these quilts on the floor in each room; our own sheets and pillows were laid between the upper quilt and the two below, and behold, our rooms were ready for the night. No apparatus for washing, of course, and nowhere to put our clothes, also of course. You may imagine how glad we were that we had brought our own pillows when we saw what the alternative was—a small roll about the size of a muff and the hardness of a brick. Even this was not as bad as it might have been, for you must know that this particular inn was rather up to date, and obviously prided itself on being quite used to foreigners. In a more unsophisticated place our fate might have been real Japanese pillows—namely, little wooden stands neatly lacquered and gilt, and adorned very likely with some grand crest in gold and covered with a fresh piece of tissue paper for our special benefit. This instrument of torture is about seven or eight inches high, and perhaps a foot long and three inches broad, with a slight depression on the top of it whereon you lay your neck as though for more convenient decapitation, your head, of course, hanging free in space. I suppose one has to lie always on one's back when using this execution block, but I do not know. Sometimes you will come to an inn where they want to be very knowing, and in such an one they will run, the moment you get to your room, and bring you a high rush-bottomed chair, apparently purloined from some church in Europe, and on that they will invite you to sit. But there is nothing in this world so weirdly forlorn and uncomfortable as to sit perched on a little straight-backed chair in the middle of a room containing no other furniture, and without even a table to keep you company. So I always send the chair ungratefully away, much to their amazement, for they think no foreigner can possibly resist such a luxury. But whether you are used to sitting on the floor or not, you will find it better than sitting in the middle of the room bolt upright and staring like the Vocal Memnon into the vacancy of space. I often wonder what people who don't send away the chair do at meal-times. Do

they sit on the chair and hold the bowls and things up in their hands, or do they put the eatables on the seat of the chair and kneel on the floor beside it? Of course you must know there is no public dining-room in a Japanese inn; your room is a convertible apartment—dining, drawing, and bedroom by turns. You get up in the morning, and when you come back from the excitements of the bath you find that every trace of your bed, and your mosquito curtains too, if it is the season for them, has vanished into space, and that nothing remains in the



ROOMS IN AN INN, FORMERLY A DAIMYO'S RESIDENCE.

room but the walls (paper or plaster, as they may happen to be respectively), the flower vase or incense burner or whatever ornament may be in the tokonoma, the flat silk cushions you sit upon, the china fire pot if it is cold, and the little smoking apparatus in all weathers. Nothing else at all, for the room is now a sitting-room and furnished as such. You order a meal for a certain hour, and when it comes the room becomes a dining-room for the time being. Your dinnèr-table is a lacquered stand about eight or nine inches high, behind which you squat,

and the maid who waits at table squats on the other side of it. She does nothing particular but preside over the big round lacquered box which contains the "honourable rice," and when you are a new-comer she makes you very nervous, for you don't know what in the world she expects you to do, and she never takes her sleepy black eyes off you as you stumble through your dishes and make a mess with your chopsticks. After you are more familiar with things you can converse with her and make her useful, but at first she is rather disconcerting, and however picturesque she may be in the way of an æsthetic adjunct to one's meal, she rather interferes with what little satisfaction there might otherwise be in it. I say "meal" because that is the vaguest word I can think of, and vagueness is the "note" of Japanese food. It is vague, in the first place, because one meal is so very like another; only the time of day will tell you whether you are at the moment eating breakfast or lunch or dinner. For all the viands are unfamiliar, and at each meal you seem to be eating very much what you ate at the one before it. When you give your order you can, if you like, say merely that you want a dinner, or else you can specify the dishes you would like to have. Both plans "may be recommended"—the first for purposes of excitement and research, the second for its rather superior chances of satisfying your hunger. The way to act upon the second plan is of course to learn the Japanese names of any dishes you may have found at all satisfying, and make a note of them; then when you come to an inn you can ask them to give you these special things. (I do not mean to suggest that you will always get them, but one can try.) Such things are various egg dishes more or less resembling omelettes. One goes by the name of "omoritza," which name somehow suggests Tolstoi's novels, but is really only "omelette" pronounced *à la Japonaise*. This dish would not be so very bad were it not for the firm conviction among the cooks that it is nice to have large cubes of quite raw onion strewn through the egg part as thick as "leaves in Vallombrosa." Then there are various fish things and soups whereof you

can learn the names, and which you can sometimes get by dint of waiting indefinitely for them. On the other hand, the meal which comes up of itself in the country inn offers much food for the mind but not much for the body. It generally consists of some sort of soup in a red lacquered bowl, with nameless tough things at the bottom, and three or four culinary conundrums in other dishes of lacquer or china, many of them looking like pickles, but evidently intended to be eaten alone—all quite pretty and dainty looking, but after you have eaten till you can eat no longer you are just about as hungry as when you began, and even the boiled rice which accompanies every meal does not seem to improve matters very much. With me it generally ends in the devouring of cakes and tea at all hours by way of making up for deficiencies. The cakes are not at all bad—most of them, indeed, are rather nice—and as they are both solid and sugary they are as a rule much more satisfying than dinner is.

Winter evenings in country inns out of the track of tourists are rather amusing. I often wonder what folks at home would say or think could they catch a glimpse of me under these circumstances, squatting on the floor by the light of an "andon," and warming myself by the side of a pretty but ineffectual arrangement consisting of a handful of live charcoal in the middle of a nice blue and white china pot full of ashes. An andon, too, is a fascinating thing to look at, but as a means of illumination it leaves something to be desired. It is a rush wick floating in oil, and enclosed in a paper lantern standing in a wooden frame of one shape or another. A common kind is a square lacquered box with a pane of paper in each side, representing one of the phases of the moon—the whole thing very charming in its effect, but casting a very dim religious light. However, one does not usually want to do very much, and if one did it would not be very easy to do it. One has to receive so many visits, and to sit and talk to the establishment of the house. They come in by the half-dozen on their knees, and when they have duly prostrated themselves before you they do not see any reason why they should not hold you in con-

versation for the rest of the evening if they like. I always let them do it; it amuses me to hear them talk, and to try to find out what sort of minds lie behind their little smiling faces, and whether there are any brains beneath their marvellous coiffure. Very often the male domestics join the party too, as well as the landlord and his wife (just think of it, sitting talking to the men-servants), and we have quite a social evening. Finally you inform the company that you are sleepy and want your bed laid. "Honourable bed augustly is it?" says everybody at once, but nobody does much, and it is generally quite a long time before you can begin to go to bed. One of my first precautions before doing so is always to see whether I cannot by hook or crook manage to get a little chink into the "amado," whereby to attain to a little ventilation. For though a Japanese house is all ventilation together by day, it is absolutely devoid of anything of the sort by night, because the amado—wooden shutters which slide in grooves on the outer side of the verandah—are then closed all round the house, and turn the whole building into a wooden box full of human beings and charcoal fires, and perfectly air-tight except in so far as there may be some knot-holes or cracks in the wood itself. The plan is to slip out through your "shoji" (*i.e.*, the sliding paper walls of your room) into the verandah without making any noise, and find the fastening which secures the amado and keeps them from sliding. Then, if you are cautious, you can often manage to make a narrow chink through which a little air may find its way into your room. No doubt it gets into other people's too, but as they do not know it, it does them no harm, though I believe the real objection to opening them is not dislike of fresh air, for the Japanese do not mind the most awful draughts by day, but fear of burglars, or rather, perhaps, of the police, who have enacted that they shall be kept closed. So at last you go to bed, not as a rule in the dark, but by the dim light of an andon. Outside all is quiet, even the wailing of the blind sham-poor's whistle, so you go comfortably off to sleep between your quilts. Presently you are awakened by an awful

rushing noise. "Has there been an earthquake and is the house coming down?" Not at all; it is only the "nezumi"—the honourable rats of the house running races in the ceiling. There are quite too many of these intelligent creatures in this country—at least, for my taste. Their name is Legion, and they are as bold as brass. They do not confine their steeplechasing to the ceiling by any means. So soon as the house is quiet they come down and career about your room, over your quilts—you may be thankful if not over your face—and if you have left any eatable thing anywhere within reach you will not find much of it in the morning. One night an unusually bold one thought fit to sample my finger, and gave it a good sharp bite, which made the blood flow. The Japanese do not seem to object to this sort of thing in the least—indeed, I really think they rather like it—but to my notions there is distinctly too much of the nezumi. One o'clock in the old Japanese reckoning is the "Hour of the Rat," but it seems to me that the hour of the rat is the whole night long. However, you make up your mind to the inevitable, and fall asleep again in spite of the rats, till presently another sound awakes you without ceremony. This time it is the watchman parading with his rattle, and loudly sounding it as he goes to let every one see how attentive he is to duty. This is apt to occur every hour, and is really more than flesh and blood can bear without some slight feeling of annoyance. It is a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance, and fortunately it is not everywhere observed. Perhaps, however, in spite of watchman and rats and andon, you manage as the night wears on to fall into a sound sleep, till with the first ray of morning comes an awful sound—a crashing, banging, deafening noise, which seems to reverberate all round at once. The room gets suddenly light, and you discover that, but for your tissue paper shoji, you are lying in full view of the street, or perhaps only of the inner courtyard of the inn. For the noise was not an earthquake—a thing which usually causes less noise and more damage—but only the opening of the amado for

the day. You perhaps consider it is not yet time to get up, so you compose yourself to sleep again, but every few minutes the shoji are opened and somebody looks in—to see who the sluggard is, I suppose, or to find out whether you are ever going to get up.

I shall never forget the unexpected beauty of the scene that such an opening of the shoji revealed to me in the dawn of an autumn morning by the sea. We had arrived overnight in darkness and rain, and had no idea of our surroundings, but as I lay in bed the next morning some one was impelled by the national spirit of research to open my shoji, by which means she was rewarded by the sight of a foreigner within, and I by the sight of the sea and sky without—a sky where the dawn was rising from the cold lemon-yellow which lay on the horizon through hues of aquamarine and emerald to the steely blue where still a few stars shone over the Pacific, lying glassy still and glittering with the pale tints of the sky above. There was no foreground to be seen, only one long pine-fringed headland ran into the sea upon the right, a line of soft purplish grey, and two branches of trees in the inn garden cut sharply across the picture—one the long arm of an ancient pine, black against the glittering brightness behind, the other the leafless branch of a persimmon still hung with its golden balls. However, one does not get a beautiful view every time, and in any case it is rather tiresome to be, as it were, on exhibition in what is supposed to be one's bedroom. So you make up your mind to get up, though very likely it is not yet half-past six. You clap your hands, and your little friends of the night before, or some of them, arrive and promptly go down on their knees. You ask if the bath is ready (if you want unused water you must take it cold or wait to all eternity), and whether the bath-room is unoccupied, hinting gently at your benighted foreign prejudice in favour of having it all to yourself. They disappear, and come back after a time to say the honourable bath is, or is not, ready. Finally you go down, and after getting the attendant to understand that you really are anxious to dispense with his services, you get your

bath of deliciously clear cold water, often from a natural spring. It is at this juncture that you discover your extreme unwisdom if you have forgotten to bring your own towels with you, for the native idea of a towel is a piece of thin, loosely woven stuff the size and shape a table napkin would be if it were cut through the middle. These affairs, it is true, have generally an artistic design in blue flitting vaguely over them, which adds greatly, no doubt, to their æsthetic value, but still they are more satisfactory as objects of art than as a means of drying oneself. Washing is altogether conducted on original principles in this country, for, over and above the well-known eccentricities of the bathing arrangements, there is absolutely no provision in one's room for washing one's hands or face during the day. You have to go down to the sort of verandah which surrounds the garden or inner court of the inn (or private house—arrangements are everywhere the same); there you will find a sort of wooden erection more or less like a sink. In it will be two or three things exactly like cake tins, but made of shining brass, and very clean and nice. These are the basins. Beside this erection there will probably be two buckets, one with hot and the other with cold water, which you convey to the brass cake tin in a wooden ladle.

Well, when you have had your bath you go back to your room, which you will find swept and garnished, and if it is an out-of-the-way place the chances are that it will be full of damsels examining your clothes with interest and amusement; indeed, you may be thankful if all your things are not away on exhibition in different parts of the establishment. Dressing, as a rule, is only to be accomplished with much difficulty and various excitements, but at last it is achieved, and you are ready for breakfast when it is ready for you (which is generally “*tadaima*”) and so you get ready for another start. You ask for your bill and pay it; you also make the landlord a present of as much as you think proper, which present is called “*chadai*”—tea money—and is a horrid institution, because it is so difficult to know how much it ought to

be. It is always received with demonstrations of gratitude, and presently the hostess comes to thank you, kneeling down with her head on the floor, and makes you a present of something in return, elegantly done up in paper and inscribed with you don't know what. Sometimes these things are little towels or fans, sometimes they are solid slabs of "yokan"—sweet bean paste—which is much more acceptable, to me at least, because it is not at all bad to eat, and when you get to a very out-of-the-way place, and starvation seems imminent, you can fall back on it as a sort of pudding. (The chief drawback to these presents is that they generally give them to you after you are packed up and have no place wherein to bestow them.) Finally you really do get away, leaving behind you a row of bowing and kneeling figures all saying "Sayonara" at once.

To-day perhaps your road is an uphill one, and you are going into the mountains. Well, if so your day will be no less delightful, though in a different way, than was your journey through the plains by the sea. By and by the road begins to rise through farm lands and terraced rice-fields, up and up till the rice-fields cease, and you are in a region of trees—camellias and azaleas, pines and cryptomerias—getting bumpier and steeper every moment till you very likely find it decidedly more comfortable to get out and walk. Such a road is specially delightful in hot weather, overhanging, as it often does, some rushing, tearing stream of pure green water, sparkling with foam and joined every now and again by some smaller torrent, dashing under the road or, if more convenient, over it. Everything is fresh and green and fragrant after the rain—it is safe to say "after the rain," because in summer almost any day is either a wet one or the day after a wet one in such places—everywhere is the sound of rushing water and the scent of the great lilies that we call Japanese at home—I do not know whether they are peculiar to Japan or not. Then there are all kinds of flowers by the wayside for you to recognise if you are a botanist, and ignorantly to admire if you are not, as well as mosses and ferns innumerable. Yet delightful as such

a road is in summer, perhaps it is no less so in the breezy days of spring, when the wild cherry blossoms flutter down before your feet, or in the end of the year, when all the trees save only the bamboo and the pine are aflame in their autumn glory of scarlet and bronze and gold, and the air feels like the elixir of life itself. At all seasons



A MOUNTAIN RIVER.

you will find here a waterfall, there a Shinto shrine, and, more acceptable perhaps than either, a little wayside rest-house where you can get tea and sweets. Every now and then in such a district you may meet a procession of pack-horses, their riders young women dressed in very rational costume indeed—very tight blue cotton trousers

and a sort of shirt of the same tucked into them—but their hair is no less elaborate than any one else's, and a modification of the inevitable "obi" encircles their waist. They ride in the most extraordinary way—at least, it seems extraordinary that they do not fall off, balancing themselves as they do in a sort of heap on the ridge of the unsteady pack-saddle, and with no particular control, so far as one can see, over the movements of the horse. But I suppose a Japanese pack-horse never wants to run away; his life's ambition seems to be to stand still and bite, both of which tastes he shares with the horses one hires for riding in the more tourist-haunted districts. (I remember one in particular who made my arm ache for days by reason of the struggle I had to keep his head always twisted round to the right so that he might not bite my toes off.) So you go on, now over a smooth new bit of causeway, now picking your toilsome way over a formless waste of stones, or again plunging through black mire a foot deep and unspeakably sticky. Very few of these roads are really lonely; one constantly meets native travellers shuffling contentedly along with garments tucked comfortably up into the girdle, and displaying a good deal of leg or gaiter as the case may be—all happy and cheerful to all seeming, whether on business or on pleasure bent. Sometimes, too, you may meet them in kagos—unspeakable vehicles in which Europeans too may go if they like. Some have told me that they do like it, or at least can manage to endure it; but on the whole I think it would be best first to get a fresh set of limbs, with joints on a new principle, before adventuring oneself in a kago. It is a thing like a saucer of wickerwork, with the brim a little higher in one place so as to form a sort of back, upholstered with thin cushions, or rather quilts, and suspended by ropes to a bamboo pole, which is carried on the shoulders of two coolies, one in front and one behind. You sit swaying between them, the pole immediately over your head and your legs tucked away under you as best you can, while your general appearance is very much like that of a weight in a scale. Of course the position is most uncomfortable, but they do say that if

you practise it long enough you will in the end become able to endure it. I myself have not practised it long enough by any means. It is the only way to go in really rough mountain regions, however, if you cannot walk, for rickshaws require something more or less like a road, and even pack-horses cannot go everywhere. There are some places full of tourists where they hire out chairs carried by four coolies, as in China, but these are not to be reckoned on for actual travelling.



A KAGO.

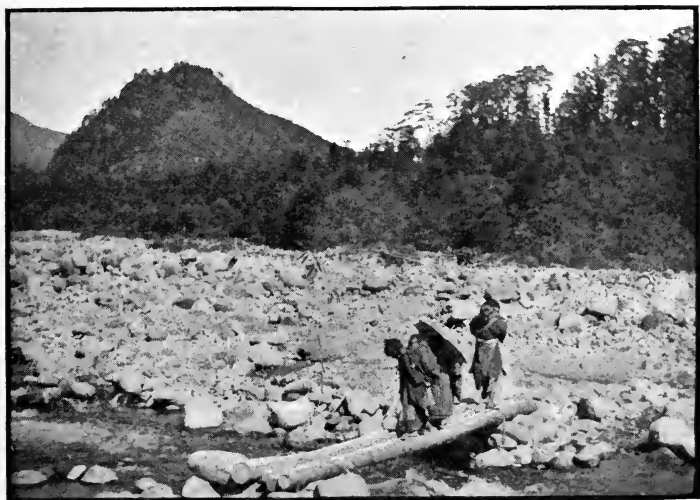
Of course as you get into the hilly country things grow more primitive ; tea-houses smaller, villages more humble, houses smaller and less airy looking ; I fear also distinctly less clean. Rice, of course, has disappeared, and forest industries take the place of its cultivation. The foreigner, too, is stared at more, and finds more perhaps to wonder at on his side. For instance, as evening approaches one may sometimes see in such villages the outdoor bath one reads of in books of travel as a universal feature of Japanese life, but which in actual fact one sees nowa-

days only here and there. The bath is more like a barrel than a bath according to our notions, and the fire to heat the water is immediately underneath it. The bather sits and boils in this, and gazes placidly over the top of the arrangement at the passing show, so that mutual instruction and edification is afforded, for the bather sees a foreigner in hat and boots and the foreigner sees a highly respectable lady or gentleman enjoying a tub in the public street without any breach of decorum.

Your inn in such a hill region may probably not be up to the standard of the more up-to-date hostelries in the plains. It will probably be much smaller and in every way less attractive, and the food is certain to be distinctly plain. You will very likely not be able to get eggs there, not to speak of fish or anything more solid, but you are sure to meet with civility and kindness, and you are as safe as you would be in Grosvenor Square. Then there are often delightful excursions to be made in forest regions, where you may see all sorts of unfamiliar trees; camphor laurels, for instance—wonderful evergreen trees, vast of girth and huge of height—cryptomerias towering dark and solemn, azalea-trees thirty or forty feet high, the national wild cherry, trees of the north and of the south, evergreen, deciduous, flowering, making the woods a blaze of colour in spring and autumn, and in summer a haven of coolness and rest. One tree in particular you may see, not specially beautiful, but interesting because did it not grow there Japan would hardly be Japan at all. I mean the lacquer-tree, whose sap is the means by which have been produced those miracles of patient art without which one can hardly think of the country in the past, and those cheap but dainty utensils of every-day life without which it would be impossible to exist there at present.

It seems to me that there is more piety on the hills than in the plains. Perhaps this is because mountains and mountain shrines are common goals of pilgrimage, or perhaps because in all countries new ideas are slower to make their way into such regions; but, whatever the cause, you may often see among the hills a little Shinto

shrine hiding behind its torii, or a stone Buddha, moss-grown, perhaps even mutilated, but reverend still as it sits unmoved under heat and cold, rain and storm, a silent preacher of Nirvana. Sometimes you may come across a wasted image of Jizo the pitiful, still surrounded by the pile of stones heaped round him by sorrowing parents as a sort of practical intercession for their departed little ones, now toiling at their endless task in the stony river-bed of Hades, safe from their demon task-master, only under the mantle of his compassion. Or again



THE FLOWING INVOCATION.

in some lonely stream you may often find another appeal to the charity of the living on behalf of the dead—a piece of white cloth fastened over the river-bed by a stake at each of the four corners, and beside it a little wooden dipper lying. Beside it too is a narrow tablet with the name of a woman dead in child-bearing, and the prayer of those who put it there is that the passer-by will pour water with the ladle into the cloth and, as he does so, say a prayer for the departed soul. For the pious belief is that when the water poured thereon has worn the cloth

through the soul is freed from punishment and enters into rest. This form of invocation is peculiar to the Nichiren sect of Buddhism. The sale of the cloth is in the hands of the clergy of that sect, and it is said that they rather spoil the poetry of the custom by making it their habit to grade the qualities of the cloth, and with them, of course, the prices. The rich can buy cloth so thin and worn that it soon wears out and falls away, but the poor have to be content with what is strong and coarse, and will hold out for many a day. However, the sight of these things is a touching one enough, and whatever the clerical view of the subject may be, there can be little doubt of the simple faith which sets up the "flowing invocation," and dictates the prayer of the charitable passer-by. Sometimes, too, you may fall in with a band of pilgrims, for pilgrimages are at least as much in vogue in the Japan of to-day as they were in the Europe of the middle ages. But they are in nowise the same, in theory at least, for the endurance of hardships is no part of their scheme, nor—pious actions though they be—do they suggest anything to the Western mind but a picnic party of the most light-hearted description. Where the piety comes in it would be rather hard to say at first sight. They are on their way to some recognised haunt of devotion, however; some shrine or mountain peak more or less famous, where the deity of the place is, as it were, "at home" to them on their arrival. If they are merely going to a temple—like Ise, for instance—there is nothing very striking about their appearance, except maybe that they are unusually smart. We do not, as a rule, put on our best clothes for a walking tour, but then this special form of walking tour also involves something in the nature of church-going, and the correct English views as to costume for that latter purpose are well known to all the world. But the mountain pilgrims are sterner stuff, and they are well worth seeing. It is best, however, to make their acquaintance on the road, not by sharing an inn with a party of them. Pilgrims all go socially in parties here, none of your solitary palmers for Dai Nihon. Well, the costume is too funny for anything; at first sight it seems

to consist of a hat and a mat, but there are other garments which a careful observer may discover. Still, the grand thing is the hat and the mat. The hat is a wonderful thing, bigger than a rickshaw man's, but somewhat after the same shape, and made apparently of wood. It overshadows the whole person walking underneath, plainly secure from rain or sun, but I wonder what they do in a gale? The mat is just an ordinary mat, like those which are used for floors, only without the framework and stuffing. It is worn upon the back, and fixed across the chest with a strap or a string in such a way that a band of pilgrims seen from behind is inappropriately suggestive of a string of sandwich-men. What in the world they want the mat for I have never made out; one would think that with such a hat a rain-coat would be wholly unnecessary. I never saw any pilgrim carrying any luggage beyond rosary chaplets and objects of piety; whether the clubs arrange for forwarding it or not I do not know. (All pilgrimages are managed by clubs, as Christmas dinners are at home.) The mat and hat style of pilgrim often wears white clothes—a sort of tunic with tight nether garments and gaiters. I never saw one that looked any whiter than piecrust, so I am inclined to think that luggage or frequent changes of apparel augustly exist not. But what the smart people who go on the less severe lowland pilgrimages do when it rains on their finery I cannot think, for they never seem to have anything more than a wallet. You have no idea how fond the Japanese are of pilgrimages, and I for one do not wonder at them. A walking tour through this most charming of countries, unburdened by luggage and by our wholly artificial wants, must be quite the most delightful thing on earth, even without the pleasing consciousness of spiritual merit laid up against a future existence into the bargain. No wonder they all go, especially as the expense is not, I believe, exactly ruinous. Country inns love entertaining pilgrims, but it is just as well not to be in one if you can help it on such a happy occasion. They are neither rude, nor rough, nor dirty, nor anything else that is unpleasant,

but they are numerous, and the men and maids of the inn go off their heads when they come. They sleep about twenty in a room, and talk all night, and you may clap your hands till you flay them for all the attention you will get. Mountain pilgrimages, especially that to the summit of Fuji, are only summer diversions—I should say devotions—but spring and summer seem to do equally well for the others. I would give anything to go on a pilgrimage myself, Buddhist or Shinto, with impartial piety, at any time of the year. Just imagine the delight of a walking tour in Japanese dress (tucked up off the ground, of course), Japanese footgear, and Japanese lack of luggage, through Japanese scenery, though, alas!—for every rose has its thorn—on Japanese food. No, I do not wonder one bit at the popularity of this form of devotion.



MAIDSERVANTS MOWING LAWN WITH SCISSORS.



A TORII.

CHAPTER III

THE NATIONAL FAITH

AS one's sojourn in this land of the beautiful and the incomprehensible extends itself one becomes aware of a distinction between the different temples one goes, as in duty bound, to see in the various places in which one may find oneself. To me a temple was at first "a temple" merely—that is, a curious and sometimes beautiful building with more or less picturesque surroundings, but I began after a while to notice that in some I was expected to take off my shoes and go in, in others to keep them on and remain outside, and that the smiling, gently chattering devotees who approached them did likewise. Into the former class, one soon observes, piety enters with unsandalled feet, and bows its head down to the very mats; then, casting its offering on the floor before the altar, begins to recite some formula in fervid tones. These are frequented more or less all day by throngs of humble folk, their courts the unrebuked

playground of brightly-clad, shaven-pated children; but the others stand in severe aloofness, a strong wooden railing, which none may pass, in front. Before these latter the passer-by, one observes, stays but a moment to cast his microscopic offering into a box outside, to bow his head with three or four clappings of the hands and a few murmured words, and so depart. These two classes of temples, so different, yet held, as it would seem, in so impartial a veneration by the people, are respectively the temples of the Buddhist and the Shinto faiths. Where one sees priests, people, colour, ornament—magnificent or merely tawdry—there is a Buddhist fane; where the people bow in silence before a cold, empty void there one learns to recognise Shinto, even apart from the torii standing without, the formal symbol of the indigenous faith. No priest is to be seen here reciting some litany before an altar bright with lamps and golden ornaments, no worshipper kneeling in devotion; silence and dreary solitude hold them continually, save (as one comes later to discover) on the rare festival of some god or tutelary spirit of the shrine. In my case, as probably in that of most new-comers, the first Shinto temple which attracted my attention was the great shrine of Hachiman at Kamakura. Here surely, if anywhere, are to be found elements which might tend to produce an impression of solemnity—dark avenues of mighty trees, huge torii of stone, surroundings of picturesque loveliness, and behind all the sense of a dimly apprehended background of historic association. Yet though the surroundings are thus impressive, and the buildings themselves have a beauty lent them by the alien faith under whose influence they were reared, what does one see there to suggest the presence of the unseen—to awaken the feeling of religious awe? Nothing, absolutely nothing. The temple proper is, as usual, closed by a heavy barrier, and obviously contains nothing at all—nothing to suggest any worship or religious life whatsoever—nor even of the propitiation of evil. An attendant is certainly there, courteous, smiling, cheerful, wholly unconcerned with the temple *quâ* a temple or religious building, his business to take

the fees for admission to the historical relics, his pleasure apparently to derive such gentle amusement as he may from watching the foolish foreigners who come to see the temple. He and some pigeons represent the whole life of the place; there is nothing about it to suggest its being the shrine of a still living faith. Yet this particular temple stands in a deserted place, alone with the glories of the past; its silent desolation is but in keeping with its surroundings, and one is not there so much depressed by its air of neglected loneliness. So too, go where you will into the country, through remote mountain passes or lonely sea-coasts, none is so far forgotten that there no torii may be seen, humble though it may be, before some shrine of grey unpainted wood, nodding, it may be, to its fall, it may be still untouched by Time, yet, new or old, empty and dead and closed. Still these lonely shrines, standing where the foot of man but rarely treads, suggest not so much cold neglect and chilling emptiness as a pathetic faith in the divine in Nature, in presences unseen yet strongly felt, in sea or stream, forest or mountain, or a feeling of the actual sanctity of some exquisite view. But in the hearts of towns where the temples stand alone in the midst of multitudes, all access barred, no priest to guard or tend, the only worship the mechanical casting of a fraction of a farthing into the chest with an absent-minded clapping of the hands, this it is which leaves upon the mind so great an impression of something missing, of a casket, as it were, without a jewel. To me the very material of the orthodox Shinto shrine conveys a certain suggestion of its own; a Shinto temple is a plain white wooden building, and somehow the Shinto faith seems a plain white wooden religion, unornamental, colourless, stiff, immeasurably dull, yet withal scrupulously clean and devoid of all vulgarity no less than of all æsthetic charm. There is nothing to shock or disgust in its rites; there is also no mystery, no romance, nothing to arouse any emotion. Temple and faith alike are plain white wood, a material frail enough for all its stiffness and but little suited, as it would seem, to endure

in these days of steel, yet somehow, as one comes later to perceive, strangely persistent. The frail wooden building survives for ages of earthquake, rain, and sun, and the strange faith enshrined within it, so primitive to all seeming, has still a hold on the national mind even in these days of new ardour for the learning of the West. If you talk to an educated Japanese, you are very likely to be favoured with the last new thing in agnosticism, but if you could get a little deeper you would also very likely find the Shintoist.

As one pursues one's studies in Shintoism, one becomes aware of a quite overpowering pantheon; the hosts of divine beings to whom it introduces one are said to amount to the inconvenient number of "eight hundred myriads," who are not only thus numerous, but also differ greatly in their nature. Some are found to be the great elemental powers—the sun and moon, the winds and the sea (or the divinities thereof), others are spirits of individual mountains, rivers, regions—gods again of thunder, of rain, of summer heat, of all kinds of abstractions, most of them with names of astounding length, hard to be remembered in their native form, and in English sounding just the least bit ridiculous. Some, again, are nothing more or less than human beings; persons famous in their day for good, or indeed, as it seems to me, sometimes also for evil; some are names belonging to the history of the nation, worshipped by and known to all; others are of purely local fame, their name and cult unknown beyond their own neighbourhood.

These spirits, great and small, in the more important temples duly receive their daily offerings, but this ceremony usually takes place at an early hour and more or less in private, so that it does little to break the general impression of desolation and neglect. Yet now and then in wandering through the country one finds that the wonted silence of the Shinto shrine is broken. Perhaps it is the feast of the "kami" of the individual shrine, or perhaps it is some general day of rejoicing, like the festival which marks the ingathering of the rice harvest, the fruits of the toilsome year. In some country village

on such a festival day the little Shinto temple seems to have come suddenly to life ; its buildings, empty certainly and innocent of all ornament save for the symbolic rope of straw with its pendent paper zigzags, are yet no longer deserted. The barrier is still before the main building, but hangings of purple cotton are looped up above it, stamped in white with, it may be, some ordinary cognisance, or, it may be, with the Imperial chrysanthemum, and over the entrance are probably crossed the white banners of the Rising Sun, for is not Shinto the Imperial faith, and is not its chief deity the " Imperial Ancestress "



GROUP OF SHINTO PRIESTS.

—Goddess of the Sun? Under the few tall cryptomeria trees which give dignity to the bare and rather shabby court are sitting and standing little groups of onlookers—or are they worshippers?—all gay and laughing in quiet placid tones. Suddenly a few thumps on a big drum sound from the main building, and the figures of priests are seen within ; quaint apparitions wearing the court robes of long ago—loose white silk garments hanging over wide trousers of the same material and bound in at the waist by a girdle. Each has a fan, or else a wand of white wood shaped like a closed fan, in his hand, and wears a black hat of what looks like varnished

buckram, bearing no apparent relation to the size of the head, to which it is fixed by a complicated arrangement of white tape, or something very like it. The worshippers, old and young, come and stand at the foot of the steps, outside the barrier, many with babies on their backs, all with the same unchanging look of pleased vacuity. The ceremony proceeds: the priests, who are on the floor of the temple, their feet about level with the heads of the spectators, move backwards and forwards with many reverences and prostrations, arranging, as it seems, and rearranging on a sort of table with shelves behind it, little white wooden stands of a shape familiar in daily life, each bearing a small quantity of food or drink, rice, vegetables of different kinds, and bottles as well—saké, one is given to understand, and water. Then squatting in the usual attitude on the floor with fans held ceremoniously erect, they recite in a low monotone some liturgy apparently no less unintelligible to the native "congregation" than to oneself, which ended, the ceremony abruptly stops, the priests move suddenly away, leaving the stands of offerings behind, and the onlookers depart also, apparently quite satisfied with what they have seen or done. Are the "kami" satisfied too? One hopes so, certainly, but the strange ceremony, interesting as it is, leaves a not altogether pleasing impression on the mind of the foreign beholder. What is the cause? There is nothing barbarous about it; no tawdry splendour, no corybantic gestures, no unearthly noises or repulsive rites accompany this offering of the first-fruits of the earth to their unseen givers; the prevailing impression of the whole is of quiet refinement and a certain very scrupulous cleanliness. Yet still something seems to be wanting, one can hardly tell what, to convey the suggestion of an act of religious worship. Perhaps it is the air of casual unconcern, the complete absence of anything like seriousness of demeanour with which the whole ceremony is watched by the people outside which gives so chilling an impression, but in any case the impression is there.

Or again, one may sometimes find signs of life in such a shrine by night. Not long ago, for instance, as I sat

on the mats in my "yadoya" in a large provincial town, I heard from out of the darkness of the autumn night that combination of wailing and rhythmical thumping which one learns so soon to recognise as Shinto music. It went spasmodically on, stopping, beginning again, always the same—tap, tap, tap—tap, tap, tap—to the slow lamentation of the flute wailing dismally on in impossible intervals through unheard-of minor keys. It seemed to proceed from the direction of some pine trees vaguely discerned through the darkness there made visible by a few paper lanterns, so being rather hard up for something to do, I arose from my mats and made for the place where the function seemed to be proceeding. Turning a dark corner, I came upon a little temple court containing a raised platform brightly lighted with rows of paper lanterns and adorned with the usual zigzags of white paper—the sacred "gohei"—at the back of which sat two men in the dress of Shinto priests or temple attendants, and wearing the usual black peaked cap with its multitudinous fastenings of tape. The music had ceased as I approached, and both these functionaries were refreshing themselves with tea made from a kettle which stood on a "hibachi" in front of them, for the night was cold enough, and to judge by the time during which I had been more or less aware of the music, they must have been there for hours. Each had his instrument lying beside him, one a flute, the other a sort of small kettledrum on legs. In front of them sat a pathetic little figure of a child—a young girl, perhaps ten or eleven years old. She wore wide trousers of bright scarlet silk—the conventional "hakama" or divided skirt of the Shinto priestess—and above it the overdress of white transparent silk which is always worn with it. Her hair was elaborately dressed with flowers and ornamental pins, and her painted face showed absolutely no sign of life or consciousness whatever, save perhaps a certain absent weariness, strange on so young a face. A small crowd was standing round the platform, and suddenly some one threw an infinitesimal copper coin on the mats whereon the child was sitting. Instantly, as though all

were moved by wires, the girl started to her feet and the two musicians dropped their teacups and began to play. The child, still with the same absent, utterly impassive look, raised a sort of sistrum in her hand, shook it once or twice in time to the music without making any movement of dancing with her feet, and then sank down as suddenly as she had risen in a heap upon the mats, while the music wailed to a sudden close and the performers addressed themselves once more to their tea. A strange sight enough it all was, the lighted kagura stage the only thing visible amidst the deep surrounding blackness, the faces of the blankly gazing crowd as they melted away into the dark, the faint rustle of the trees overhead, the automaton child and her expressionless face as she started up time after time when some passer-by cast his careless coin upon her mats, the impassive players dividing their attention between their music and their seemingly never-to-be-ended tea. I stared long at the queer alien sight, wondering greatly the while at the strangely divergent forms under which the religious instinct shows itself in different races, marvelling also not a little at the inexhaustibleness of the musicians' tea-kettle, from which as from another miraculous cruse, they seemed able to replenish their teapot quite indefinitely. Thus wondering, and longing greatly to discuss with some native the questions suggested by the ceremony, I suddenly heard a voice close by. "Are you Inguris or America?" it asked, and when I had duly replied to that all too familiar question I (rather foolishly, seeing the length of time I have been in Japan) asked my questioner something concerning the meaning of the ceremony. "There is no meaning. I wish go to Engrand. Have you been in Underground Rairway? I wish go in Underground Rairway." So I went away sorrowful, for it was not of the underground railway with all its attractions that my mind was at the moment full; that shrieking pollution seemed far enough away from this sweet pine-scented darkness and the little maid with her sistrum dancing before the unseen powers in the lanterns' yellow glow.

Perhaps another time you may assist at a function in some great temple once splendid and famous but now stripped by purifying zeal and looking bare and shabby, its once gorgeous fabric showing signs of evident neglect. There on some spring afternoon, as the sun's last rays fall on the pink cherry blossoms all around, may be seen perhaps some "matsuri," it may be purely local, yet more gorgeous far than anything you are likely to see in any village shrine. Perhaps, as once happened to me, you may find yourself assisting at the dedication of a votive lamp by some pious society. Then you would see the great shrine lighted by hanging lamps of ancient bronze, relics of Buddhist influence, great and beautiful, shedding a soft radiance on the forms of a number of priests and privileged devotees admitted within the shrine. Some time before the ceremony their gay procession might have been seen wheezing and wailing its way through the ancient city's streets with all the solemnity of the most depressingly correct Shinto music; men and women in holiday attire and children innumerable, all bright as blossoms, laughing and chatting round the sacred car or glorified wheelbarrow which bore the votive lamp, huge and gilded, made more or less after the ancient shape, but plainly showing in its careless workmanship and tawdry ornament the taste of a more enlightened age. Not two shabby priests suffice for this ceremony; many and gorgeous are the hierophants present—priests in white, priests in green, some few in violet, all wearing long narrow court trains hanging far behind them from the waist. Up and down the high steps at the back of the shrine they go, bearing offerings, bowing, kneeling, continually reciting something. The new lamp is on a stand in the middle, and round it is a band of little girls from perhaps five to seven years old, bravely arrayed in paint and rouge with gauzy white robes over purple silk "hakama," kneeling demurely among the priests; their elders—some twenty or thirty in number—behind them. The ceremony goes on and on; evening begins to fall and the lamps to shine more brightly on the gorgeous dresses of the officiants, but still the doleful

liturgy seems no nearer its end. Suddenly it ceases with extreme abruptness, the children and their elders descend hurriedly from the shrine, and the priests kneel in ranks on either side of a tall young man arrayed in flowing garments of white silk and wearing that curious headdress of old Japan which looks as though the wearer had an open fan fixed to either side of his head. Solemnly he performs a mystic dance full of extraordinary dignity and grace, watched by the impassive faces of the priests as he dances seriously on to the strains of the dismal music inseparable from such sacred performances. Suddenly he falls back without warning into the usual sitting position on the floor, and, with a few more bows all round, the ceremony comes to an abrupt conclusion: the priests withdraw and the spectators disperse, the little children in their gala dress making their way through the admiring crowd with an air of serious dignity very charming to behold.

After many a visit to many a shrine, great and small, new and barn-like or ancient and still fair to see, at last I too determined, not long ago, to make a pilgrimage to Ise—to that shrine of the Sun Goddess which is the holy place *par excellence* of Great Japan. For of old, they tell us, the Emperor Suinin took an image of the goddess, and giving it to the princess Yamato-hime, he charged her saying, “Seek out a place where I may set up this image.” So the princess took the image and went with it to several places till at last she came to the land of Ise. Then the goddess spake to her and said, “This land of Ise is a delightful land, and in it will I dwell.”

I refused to be deterred by all the warnings I had received telling of approaching disappointment, of unattractive architecture, of jealous curtains and gates which none may pass, and making up my mind beforehand to all these things, I started on my pilgrimage to this Far Eastern Mecca prosaically by railway—that railway which they say is ruining all the towns along the route, once so flourishing in the days when every one made the pilgrimage and every pilgrim must perforce go by road. Yet still, though the multitudes which throng the inns and tea-houses are less than in pre-railway days and the

Europeanised upper classes will have none of the pilgrimage, fully half a million of humbler folk come every year, they tell us, to obtain the blessing of the "Great Shining Deity" whose chief earthly shrine is the great temple here, fully persuaded that so their worldly prosperity may have sure increase. Whether any corresponding spiritual benefit is expected or desired is not so clear; indeed, from certain all too obvious features of the temple town one is tempted to infer that the goddess does in fact make no very strict demands upon the lives of her votaries. However, be that as it may, the majority of these believing folk approach the shrine, as I did, by the railway. The train slowly made its way by a line of extraordinary complexity, if one may judge by the number of times one had to change, through a region which seemed to me less beautiful by far than most parts of Japan, the opinion of the Sun Goddess notwithstanding. (Perhaps, however, she was thinking only of the coast district; this I afterwards found really is very beautiful.) Finally, however, I arrived, all difficulties surmounted, and drove through the starry darkness into the town, which turned out when I reached it to be rather more lively-looking than a Japanese town generally is at night; its long lines of inns and tea-houses brightly lighted and many of them conveying suggestions of anything rather than pilgrim-like sobriety. My inn I found was large and beautiful, charming in its cleanliness and simplicity, and not different from others in less holy places so far as the usual routine of asking and answering questions was concerned.

Next morning I started on my voyage of discovery, and found out amongst other things that this place is not one village, but several, though they seem all to come more or less under the name of Yamada, which is the place where the station is and also my inn. The impression made by the morning streets was distinctly more edifying than that which I had received the night before. As I passed through the long, narrow streets I saw everywhere the evidence of Shinto piety; over every door was hung the mystic rope of rice straw with its pendent

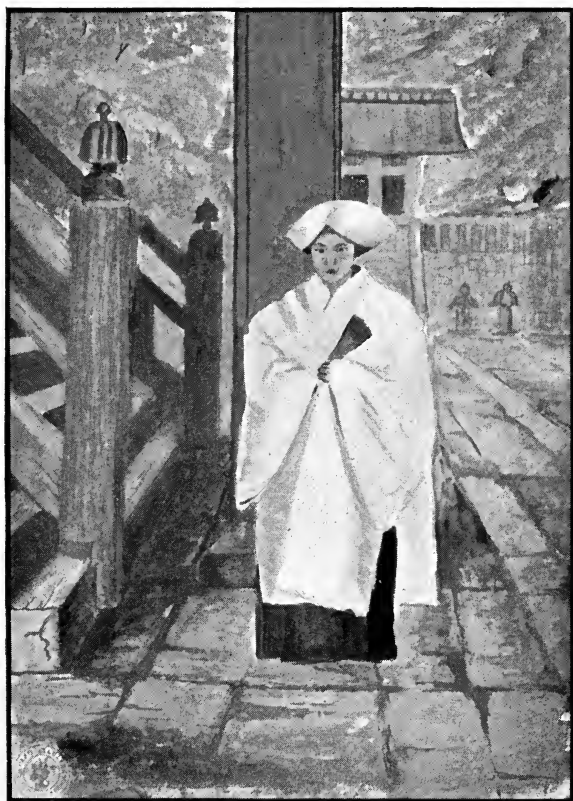
gohei ; almost every house which was not an inn or a more or less respectable tea-house seemed to be a shop for the sale of objects of piety—kakemonos mostly, cheap and execrable as works of art however great their other virtues. Most of these pictures represented the radiant Amaterasu standing amidst the clouds in robes of white, her long hair floating over her shoulders, and the sun in a golden glory round her, though there were other subjects to be had also, notably pictures of the holy shrines themselves, drawn with a fine disregard for perspective and for light and shade. Besides the kakemonos there were other objects of devotion on sale, of uses all unknown to me, but which were all of the white wood and straw and paper type beloved of Shinto. The streets seemed quite deserted thus early in the morning and strangely quiet after the joviality of the evening before ; the saints, I concluded, were now rejoicing in their beds.

The kuruma ride to the temple of the Sun Goddess was through very pretty scenery, wholly lacking anything like grandeur but full of the distinctive charm of rural Japan—blue-green hills, grey-brown cottages, each with its little garden now bright with the national chrysanthemum, rice-fields with a few blue-clad peasants at work here and there among them. At last one comes to a deep depression among the wooded hills, through which a little river runs, spanned by a long bridge of the usual grey unpainted wood. At the end of the bridge is a huge torii of wood, in the plainest style of Shinto orthodoxy, from which point to the temple the pilgrim must make his way on foot, along a wide pathway under the deep shade of magnificent cryptomeria and camphor groves. Another torii, and then one is within the precincts of the temple itself, whose subsidiary buildings stand here “plain in their neatness,” but nevertheless dignified enough, their heavy roofs covered with that peculiar thatch of closely laid slips of dark brown bark which is quite usual in Shinto temples, but here, for once, to be seen in perfect repair and looking like deep brown velvet. The austerity of these buildings, I observed, was also mitigated by a certain amount of ornamental brasswork overlaid here and

there upon the bare white beams, especially over the doorways. In one of these outer buildings I saw all that profane eyes may of the worship of the Sun Goddess—the sacred pantomimic dance called the Kagura. The kagura stage is no mere little platform here, as in so many places, but a spacious hall covered with the same heavy thatched roof as the rest of the buildings. I joined with certain native pilgrims in asking for the dance (which, like too many other things in this material world, is a mere question of payment), and it was performed for our edification in this hall, which was full of bright reflected light from the sunlight falling in brilliant patches through the heavy trees without. It was executed by a number of performers in very gay attire, pretty enough and curious to see, yet to my idea less effective than humbler kaguras seen before on less imposing stages. Moreover, the bright light of the prosaic noon seemed less suited to the old-world associations of the dance than the dim light of evening might have been, when the glaring artificialities, and indeed the too great smartness of the dresses, might have been mellowed by the soft light of paper lanterns. But indeed the Ise shrines, immemorial though their traditions be, are not unaffected by the up-to-dateness of the Meiji epoch, and it may be that if the kagura is ever danced there by night it is to the light of American kerosene burning in tin lamps perpetrated in Germany. After the kagura we wandered round the outermost of the many wooden fences which hide from profane eyes the majesty of the shrine. Only by climbing a little eminence I could make out by the roofs the arrangement of the buildings within the sacred enclosure, and even got a rough sketch of all that was to be seen of them. Stiff and angular erections they were, each with its projecting roof-tree and row of cigar-like logs along the top, an arrangement which goes back in suggestion to those vague early days when the heavenly kami worshipped within first sent their descendants down to earth to quiet the “Land of Reed Plains” and to dwell, its divine rulers, in the primitive simplicity of log huts. All these sacred buildings were grey and colourless as usual, and appar-

ently quite without ornament except where here or there a glint of light showed where some beam was overlaid with chased brass, especially from the central building wherein is enshrined the mirror of the goddess, too sacred for even its guardians' gaze.

There is another temple here also, nearer the town, and somewhat less holy as dedicated to a deity of earth rather than of heaven—the goddess, in fact, of nothing more sublime than “food.” Its surroundings are less beautiful than those of the Temple of Amaterasu; they are less romantically situated, and the trees are not nearly so magnificent. In fact, the part of the grounds nearest the temple itself is comparatively bare, and has rather an air of newness, though the hill which rises at a little distance from it is covered with groves of great beauty. Passing beneath the huge torii on foot, I followed some native pilgrims down to the water hard by, and there performed my ceremonial ablutions, inwardly hoping that all I did might be strictly in order, mindful of the fate which overtook a famous Japanese statesman of the progressive type, who, having failed in reverence to the shrine, paid for his levity with his life. This rite duly performed—rather a cold one, by the way, on a December day—I followed my Japanese fellow-pilgrims towards the temple, heroically determined to do whatever they did, so as to convey the impression of my perfect orthodoxy. Following in their wake, I duly arrived at the fence which shuts off the sacred precincts from all comers, and in which at this temple a gate is left open, though a white curtain of semi-transparent stuff hangs over it. Beside the gate was a sort of sentry-box, in which a policeman, in regulation European costume, was on duty. This official came up to us as we deferentially approached, and ordered me in tones of austere command to take off my hat, sternly ignoring the Western custom, which does not impose this mark of reverence on the be-hatpinned sex. I obeyed precipitately, and at the same time we all removed our shoes and cloaks, I inwardly trusting, in view of the rather hard frost, that our veneration for the shrines would involve no further undressing. “It is



A SHINTO PRIESTESS.



augustly well," said the guardian of the law, and retired within his box to warm himself with his hibachi and furtively watch me while I looked on at the devotions of my fellow-pilgrims as they squatted devoutly on the matting spread upon the yellow gravel before the veiled gate, whose curtain prevents all but the dimmest view of the sacrosanctities showing darkly through it. We all, of course, knew better than to touch it; besides, I also knew pretty well what was behind, for had I not already peeped with reverence over the fence of the other temple, which, as I am told, is exactly the same? So we rose to depart, and the policeman, satisfied apparently with the entire discretion of my behaviour, unbent suddenly from his official dignity, and began to ply me with the inevitable string of questions, all with much cheerful laughter and a complete disregard, as it seemed to me, of the presumably awful nature of our surroundings.

So true it is that "there is nothing to see, and they won't let you see it" at the Ise shrines. The impression left on one's mind by a visit to this place is certainly one of exclusion—of being shut out from everything—yet this impression, after all, is not made by Ise only. Every Shinto shrine, every Shinto ceremony, produces the same feeling of an exclusion not material only, as of gates and fences, but of a more impassible moral and spiritual barrier which stands for ever between our curiosity, even our sympathy, and the ideas which lie behind what we see—the impassible barrier, the unfathomable gulf which divides the soul of the West from the soul of the East. There is no time, perhaps, when one feels so completely "out of it" in this country as on one of these occasions. You may stay in a Japanese town in Japanese inns, you may make Japanese friends and visit their houses, learn their language and get into their ways to some extent, even—crowning achievement—learn to sit in their fashion without agony, walk in their footgear, eat with their chopsticks, even perhaps begin to fear that a craving for saké will end in your ruin, but go to a Shinto matsuri, pay attention to the ceremony and to the worshippers, and you will realise the mental gulf which separates you from

your agreeable little friends. You may get into their clothes and they into yours (with results in both cases pleasing to the wearer and distressing to the beholder), but you cannot get into each other's minds. You attend debates in their parliament, you see reviews of their army, manœuvres of their navy; their foreign policy is to be reckoned with in Downing Street, and their Ambassador, you know, dines with the Lord Mayor, but you are also aware that before his departure from his native shores he had to bow in his official capacity before a certain Shinto shrine. You may go to a Shinto shrine also, but when you do you will find something as alien to your ideas as your whole mental life is to that of the rest of the spectators. Somehow with Buddhist ceremonials this is not so much the case. There is always something there to suggest a certain kinship between their ideals and your own; certain spiritual conceptions familiar to yourself from infancy lie behind their outward observances, but Shinto takes you into a region wholly unknown—a barren and dry land where no water is.

Still, apart from this, it seems to me that there is something to be seen at Ise over and above the interest which cannot but attach to the central hearth of a cult so ancient and so unique among the religions of the earth. There is, for instance, an indescribable charm in a visit to these temple grounds by night, a night, perhaps, of utter darkness save for the faint light of a young moon showing tree and torii dimly outlined against the depths of the sky behind, when no sound is heard but the rustling of the fresh soft wind among the branches and the murmur of the sacred river, and no light remains after the sinking crescent's last unearthly gleam save here and there a faintly glowing drop of yellow light where a little rush lamp shines ineffectually through the paper windows of some great stone lantern standing solitary amidst the trees.

What then, you may ask, is the nature of this faith so curiously unlike the other religions of the world? What light does longer acquaintance with the country cast upon it? Where is an explanation to be found of the extra-

ordinary phenomenon of a religion to all seeming absolutely primitive persisting in a society which can trace back its history through long ages of a cultured civilisation, and which now for the space of a whole generation has diligently formed itself on the latest Western models? How can a government whose admirable army and up-to-date navy are the astonishment of Europe, which glories in its Diet, its Constitution, its brand new Marquises and Viscounts, its scientific and practical improvements, at the same time with all this profess and officially support this old-world faith? Perhaps you will say that after all the life of a religion does not lie in the cosmogonies and other ancient legends enshrined in its sacred writings, but in its ethical system and the relations between it and the deeper needs and aspirations of the human soul. No doubt; but of all this there is, as a matter of fact, nothing at all in Shinto. It is a system wholly mechanical, and no fact is more generally known about it than the fact that it has no moral code whatsoever—no ethical system at all. It is often said—it is nothing unusual to hear the Japanese themselves say it—that Shinto is not a religion, and so far as the etymological sense of that word goes this is certainly true. It has never imposed any restriction on morals or conduct, and the conception of conscience is wholly alien to it. Still, as a systematic theory of the unseen, concerning itself with spiritual forces however dimly conceived of, and providing buildings and ceremonies for their worship, it is not easy to see what else to call it than a religion.

In order to arrive at something like an answer to these questions, one has to look back for a moment to the myths which are the groundwork of this creed, and to the influences which have tended to its preservation and revival. These myths are to be found in two ancient native works, called respectively the “Kojiki” and the “Nihongi,” of neither of which could I read one word if I were to see them. But they have been translated by two famous scholars into English, so that any one who chooses to take the trouble can read them for himself, and what I am going to tell you of their contents is entirely derived

from a perusal of these translations. Even in English, by the way, they are not too easy to follow, because they go from one thing to another with all the inconsequence of a nightmare—still one may make out the main outlines of the story clearly enough.

As one approaches the strange fantastic world these myths bring before one's eyes one cannot but be struck by its curious remoteness—the wide difference between it and our own legendary "Urwelt," that confused world of strangely mingled elements, Eastern and Western, Hebrew, Greek, Teutonic, which has been the source of those multitudinous legends and traditions from which our Western race has drawn its notions of the beginnings of things. One of the few points that Shinto has in common with other existing systems is the possession of these written records of the origin of the Universe and of the earliest dealings between Earth and Heaven. Yet even here a difference presents itself. The writings in question, though dealing largely with the supernatural and with events beyond the ken of history, are yet not regarded as particularly sacred, nor do they attempt to draw any moral lessons or found any moral injunctions upon the events related. They profess merely to be history, and are so regarded (in spite of their plentiful lack of anything like historical qualities), and are continued down to dates not far removed from the quite well-known times of their compilation in the seventh and eighth centuries respectively. As they approach the period of the dawn of anything like history in the ordinary sense of the word they become mere chronicles of every-day events and genealogies. No distinction, however, seems to be made between this period of very pedestrian chronicling and the record of that earlier age when the stage is held by divine actors whose forms loom huge and vague through the mists of cosmic antiquity.

When the veil which hides the beginning of all things is raised by the Shinto cosmogony a dim and formless waste is revealed to our eyes. Matter already exists, but of mind there is as yet no trace; no Divine Spirit moves upon the face of the waters. The earth and the heaven

are not separated from one another—the universe is a chaotic mass, infinite, obscure, “without form,” yet not “void,” for we are told that it contained “germs.” In the abysses of this cosmic mass a stirring is in mysterious wise set up, and the genesis of heaven and earth begins. So far this picture differs not so widely from our familiar conceptions. If we miss the imagery of the Hebrew seer, for whom the creative hand is visible in each successive step towards a perfect world, we may recognise something suggestive of the old Hellenic myth in the picture which follows of the separation of earth from heaven; something, too, of that vision of the Roman poet who beheld a universe wherein heaven and earth began to separate from one another by the spontaneous action of the lighter and the heavier atoms of the primeval chaos.

Yet even here comes in a distinctive note, for the Japanese record makes the separation take place, not by the hand of the Creator nor by atoms acting under their own physical laws, but by the distinction of the two principles which Chinese philosophy perceives to underlie the moral and material universe—the male, or heavenly, and the female, or earthly, element. Accordingly it is by the separation of these two that the heaving mass resolves itself into an upper and a nether part. Slowly the purer and clearer elements draw upwards apart, slowly the grosser and heavier sink down, and the upper region thus formed by the pure ethereal elements becomes the Plain of High Heaven, and beneath it lies the dull and heavy mass from which the earth is later to take shape. Next we are told that between them were produced various deities of lordly but cumbrous name. The span of their divine lives we do not learn, nor the nature of their august performances. Only as they came into being for no obvious reason so they seem in like manner to have departed from it, for we are briefly told that they “hid their bodies.” At last appeared two deities, a brother and sister, whose names were Izanagi and Izanami, respectively interpreted as “The Male who Invites” and “The Female who Invites,” and this divine

pair figure at once as the creators of the world and the ancestors not only of the rulers of Japan but of its islands themselves. For "the heavenly kami" gave commandment to them to "make, consolidate, and give birth to the drifting land," and deigning thus to charge them, they granted them "a heavenly jewelled spear" wherewith to fulfil the task. Now heaven and earth, though already distinct, were yet in no wise widely sundered, and though the space between was growing daily wider, there lay between them a floating bridge by which it was still possible to pass from heaven to earth or from earth to heaven. So the divine pair took their stand upon this bridge, and reaching down therefrom they stirred with the heavenly spear the brine beneath till it curdled, and then drew the spear up from the waters. And the brine trickled downwards, and, dripping from the point, was piled up amidst the waters and became an island, by name Onogorojima—the Isle of the Congealed Drop. Then Izanagi and Izanami left the Floating Bridge of Heaven and descended upon the island they had made, and there they erected a palace for themselves. After this they betook themselves to the task of creating other islands, and in succession they brought into existence their children, the islands of Japan, and last of all "Great-Yamato-the-Luxuriant-Island-of-the-Dragonfly" — known in common speech as the Main Island. So then when they had finished with the countries they began afresh by giving birth to deities. Of these there were some thirty or forty, all deities of natural phenomena and forces of the visible world—deities of the Wind and of the Sea, of trees, moors and mountains, the prince and princess of Swift Autumn, of Foam Calm, of Foam Waves, of Food. Last of all came the deity of Fire, whose birth cost the life of his mother, and "she sickened and lay down and divinely retired." For it appears that some Hades, some dim under-world, is in existence though not hitherto mentioned, and thither Izanami "retires" after the disastrous birth of the deity of Fire, leaving Izanagi plunged in grief so inconsolable that he forthwith determines to seek

his lost consort in the regions of the dead. On this follows a strange, fantastic tale of the adventures of this Japanese Orpheus, wherein the material and the immaterial are hopelessly confused and cause and effect seem to have no very intimate connection with one another. He finds her indeed, but cannot bring her back, for, like Persephone, she has eaten of the food of Hell. Moreover, he violates her command not to look upon her, and the story ends rather inconsequently with a tremendous quarrel between the two and his narrow escape from her violence.

When Izanagi arrives at last in safety at the upper world he hastens to purify himself from the contaminations of the realm of Hades by bathing in a certain river's mouth; and as he casts down his garments many kami are born therefrom, and many from the washings of his person—deities of evil, most of them, born of the defilement he had contracted in that "polluted, hideous land." Lastly, from his left eye sprang the great goddess Amaterasu, and from his right eye the deity of the moon, and from his nose came forth "His Impetuous Male Augustness" Susa-no-o no Mikoto. And Izanagi rejoiced exceedingly in these children, and the fair goddess Amaterasu pleased him before all the rest, and he gave her dominion over the sun, and said, "Do thou rule the Plain of High Heaven," and the moon he gave to the deity who had sprung from his right eye, and to Susa-no-o he gave the dominion of the seas. After this one does not hear much more of the creative pair; Izanami has been disposed of as goddess of the under-world, and the name of Izanagi occurs seldom again. Though the older gods are not forcibly dispossessed—anything like the Greek legends concerning the rise of the Olympian dynasty would be too shocking, I suppose, to Far Eastern notions of filial piety—still the ancient dispensation does at this point effectually disappear, and the younger dynasty of light plays henceforth the leading *rôle*.

So Amaterasu-o-mi-kami sprang up by the Floating Bridge of Heaven, and took the dominion of the sun and ruled over the heavens. But the "Impetuous Male"

Susa-no-o went not to his dominions of the sea, but stayed behind weeping and lamenting, and so the wrath of his divine father fell upon him and he banished him. Then said he, "I will go first and take leave of my sister the Sun Goddess," and forthwith ascends to heaven, where Amaterasu receives him with evident misgivings, not, apparently, without good reason, for after various episodes his conduct in heaven becomes altogether outrageous and the goddess, terrified by his behaviour, shuts the door of her heavenly rock dwelling and retires within. When she had done this the Plain of High Heaven was darkened, and all the "Central Land of Reed Plains" lay hid in dreadful night. Then portents of woe arose on every hand, and the voices of the deities (whose number had now increased to myriads) were heard from all around. And they assembled in the bed of the tranquil River of Heaven—in Japan, and so, presumably, in Heaven, a river-bed is looked on as quite a natural place to assemble in—and bade the "Deity Thought-Includer" think of some plan for the ending of their troubles. So they wrought a wondrous mirror of shining metal, and preparing sundry propitiatory offerings they collected all the cocks together, and setting them on a perch before the cave they caused them to crow. Then grand liturgies were recited prayerfully at the entrance to the cavern, and the goddess Ama-no-Uzume danced before the door a mystic dance, and played the while upon her flute of bamboo pierced with holes. And all the gods applauded and laughed, and Amaterasu within marvelled greatly, and thus spake from the inside: "Methought that in my retirement the Plain of Heaven would be darkened, and likewise the Central Land of Reed Plains. How is it that Ama-no-Uzume makes merry and the eight hundred myriad deities all laugh?" And Ama-no-Uzume answered and said, "We rejoice and are glad because there is another deity more illustrious than Thine Augustness." And while she was thus speaking they gently pushed forward the mirror, and respectfully showed it to the Sun Goddess, and she, more and more astonished, came gradually forth to gaze upon



THE SUN GODDESS.
(From an Ise kakemono.)



it, and they closed the door behind her and light was restored to heaven and earth. And the deities took counsel together and very prudently expelled "His Impetuous Male Augustness"; whereupon he descended to the Land of Reed Plains and dwelt in Izumo, where he and some other deities had a long series of very confusing adventures. But the Land of Reed Plains was filled with strife, and the heavenly kami took counsel together how they might pacify it. And Amaterasu declared that the earth should be ruled by a divine son of hers, a small part of whose august name was Ame-no-oshi-ho-mimi. But he, seeing the strife and violence that prevailed on the earth, went no further than the Floating Bridge of Heaven, and returned, saying that the land was "very uproarious." And after the failure of several other celestial envoys the task of ruling it was committed to that divine grandson of the goddess whose name, or part of it, is Ninigi-no-Mikoto. So Ninigi descended to earth bearing with him the divine Mirror, which the radiant goddess bestowed upon him, saying, "Look upon this mirror as my spirit; keep it in the same house and on the same floor as yourself, and worship it as if you were worshipping my actual presence."

At this point the scene shifts finally to earth; we are done with the marvels of creation and the genesis of the gods; the floating bridge ceases to connect Heaven and Earth, and the tales which follow are concerned with the adventures on earth of the Heavenly Descendants and their struggles with the terrestrial deities, who, though they had surrendered in theory to the powers of Heaven, appear nevertheless to have contended with their descendants for several generations. Yet since these same descendants are members of the Shinto pantheon, no less than the Heavenly Deities themselves, and the cardinal point of the Shinto faith is the unbroken continuity of the present Imperial dynasty with that of the gods of the early days, one has to follow their story a little farther if one would see what Shinto really is in patriotic eyes to-day.

So then Ninigi-no-Mikoto, the august grandchild,

descended from heaven with his mirror, and parting the clouds before him alighted on the peak of the Mountain Takachiho and became the ancestor of the first earthly Emperor, now venerated as Jimmu Tenno and ancestor of all subsequent Mikados. After the celestial founder of the dynasty came a series of about a dozen "Heavenly Sovereigns," none of whom seem very interesting till we come to the famous Empress Jingo, who was consort of the fourteenth Emperor, and was, according to tradition, the conqueror of Korea, that "Hermit Kingdom" the control of which is still so vital a question for Japan. The story of the conquest was this: One day while the Emperor was busy with the subjugation of the rebellious tribes of Kyushu the Empress became divinely possessed, while the Heavenly Sovereign was playing on his august lute, and she cried out and said, "There is a land to the westward; in that land there is abundance of treasures dazzling to the eye, from gold and silver downwards. That land I will bestow on thee." And the Heavenly Sovereign answered saying, "If one ascend a high place and look westward no country is to be seen; there is only a great sea." And he pushed away his august lute, and saying, "These are lying deities," he did not play on it, but sat silent. Then the deities were very angry and said, "As for this land, it is not a land for thee to rule—go thou the one road." Then the Prime Minister Take-no-uchi was afraid, and spoke saying, "I am filled with awe, my august Sovereign; I pray thee continue playing thine august lute." Then slowly he drew his august lute to him and languidly played upon it. And soon the sound of the august lute died away and was silent, and they lifted a light and looked, and behold the Heavenly Sovereign was dead. But the Empress, in nowise dismayed, proceeded to make ready her army and to collect a fleet wherewith to sail to the land of the West. And the waves of the sea helped her miraculously and the fishes bore her ship upon their backs, and so she landed on the Korean shore, and there after three years of fighting she fixed her yoke upon the necks of its three kings, and made them

tributaries of the Empire of Japan. And so, returning in triumph to her own land, she brought into the world her son, the Emperor Ojin, whose birth she had delayed in wondrous fashion for the three whole years of her fighting. It was in virtue of the divine influence of this unborn son that her mighty conquests were accomplished, for though in no way famous as a warrior in after-life, he was yet none other than the dread god of war who under the name of Hachiman is worshipped to this day throughout the length and breadth of the land.

After this the tale grows more prosaic, and at last passes definitely out of the divine twilight into the tedious regions of the chronicler.

What, then, is the nature of the religion which is founded on the events which these narratives describe, and what part do we find it to play in the life of the nation when we pass beyond those shrines and temples whose bareness strikes the eye so forcibly? The first thing, perhaps, to occur to the Western mind is the total absence from the story of all suggestion of anything like moral sentiment; throughout all the tale there is nothing to imply that one course of action is regarded as more or less praiseworthy than another. There seems to be no conception of any difference between right and wrong, nor is there anywhere to be discovered that sense of the existence of sin, of the transgression of some dimly apprehended higher law, which makes itself so clearly felt in those early systems which have moulded the thought of the West. The Kojiki in its naive recital of the divine doings of its immoral—or at least wholly unmoral—heroes does certainly suggest the “divine” and “blameless” personages who do so many doubtful things in Homer; yet there are certain sanctities which Homer very clearly recognises: behind his gods and goddesses he feels the presence of some supreme mysterious law by which transgression is associated with punishment. But in the Kojiki there is no feeling of this kind; all deeds, good and bad, are divine because the doers are divine—their intrinsic character is in no way to be considered. No Nemesis is to be dreaded by the unjust

doer; no Furies disturb the peace of the slayer; the divine Yamato-take, for instance, cuts off his brother's head for staying away from the Imperial dinner party and then goes on his way rejoicing, unvexed by the Erinnyes of the slain. Nothing, in fact, throughout the entire narrative seems to provoke either surprise or horror; what happens happens, and there is no more about it.

But the total absence of any moral element from this divine tale will seem less surprising if you will for a moment consider the meaning of the word "kami," which is usually translated "god"—a word which carries with it to the Western mind ideas different by a whole heaven from that suggested to the Japanese by "kami." Much of our astonishment in the face of Shinto comes from our importing the connotation of our word "God" into that of the Japanese word "kami," for kami has no necessary connection with any idea of moral superiority, still less with that of a Supreme Being. It simply means what is above—anything relatively higher—the upper part of anything; hence, metaphorically, a superior. The hair grows on the head, the uppermost part of the body, therefore the word for hair is "kami"; the Government is above the people, and therefore "kami"; "kami" was the title of a feudal lord as above his vassals, so too "kami" is something above or beyond humanity—not necessarily anything better, but something supernatural. Thus mountain or sea, tree or river, we are told, may be "kami" on their own account; not by virtue of any indwelling spirit, but by reason of some property to be revered or some danger to be dreaded in connection with them. In the native mind the distinction between the natural and the supernatural is but vaguely apprehended; hence any phenomenon apparently belonging to the natural world, yet in some way felt to be mysterious, is found to be most conveniently explained by classing it as "kami" and so ceasing to wonder about it, for concerning the mysteries of the supernatural the Japanese mind is wholly incurious. That a thing or a fact should be supernatural excites no surprise; the

existence of the supernatural is accepted without question, but wherein it may be supposed to consist or what may lie beyond it is a matter of no concern. Accordingly the elastic word "kami" covers a multitude of wholly different conceptions; there are kami great and small, good and bad, noble and ignoble, benevolent and harmful. Some are abstractions, others are natural phenomena: from the bright Sun Goddess and the hosts of heaven downwards come in infinite gradation eight hundred myriads of kami—spirits of ocean and of foam, of lakes and of fresh rivers; fantastic beings mysteriously identified, like the nymphs of old, with the life of tree or vine, pine-clad mountain or rushing waterfall, spirits of wind and thunder, of rain or harvest, or of the seasons of the year; spirits, too, associated with the farm and with the family, of the homeliest facts of daily life, like those of that ancient national cult of Italy that faded so slowly from the rural districts before the gods of Olympus—gods of the rice cauldron, of the well-rope, of the saucepan; nothing so humble that it may not have its guardian spirit, to be duly propitiated upon occasion with prayer and clapping of the hands. Whatever else a kami may be or not be, moral attributes such as wisdom or holiness are no part of the concept; power of some kind for good or ill, either in heaven or earth, is all that is necessary.

Such being the nature of the supernatural beings which people the Shinto pantheon, one need feel no wonder if their service implies no moral code and imposes no moral restraints. It may be that in course of time Shinto would have evolved a moral code, as other cults whose beginnings were no less primitive have done, and that with increasing civilisation the coarser and more childish elements of the early faith would have gradually dropped into the background and an ethical system been developed from its higher aspects to meet the requirements of advancing thought. Indeed, it might not improbably have been so, for one can easily imagine a more barbarous beginning for a more highly developed cult. There is nothing repulsive, for example, in the picture

of the initial act of the creative pair as they stand on the bridge between earth and heaven and separate the dry land from the water with their jewelled spear; nothing unattractive in the figure of the radiant Sun Goddess Amaterasu, who, supreme from the beginning, has in course of time tended more and more to eclipse all other gods of the Shinto heaven. But it was not to be. The fate of Shinto was a strange one, arrested as it was in an early stage of its development by the sudden advent of an alien faith—a faith which offered to the human soul what it could never find in the empty shadow-land of Shinto—emotion, dogma, splendour of ritual, enthusiasm for holiness and the satisfaction of the craving for a personal and lovable object of worship; against all which things Shinto with its primitive vagueness, its cold unemotionalism, could never hope to stand. Such a fate indeed has overtaken many and many a primitive belief, many an antique system of nature worship has faded upon the advent of some fuller, more developed faith. But the strange part of the story of Shinto is that though thus overwhelmed and overlaid by Buddhism and to all appearance absorbed by it, yet it never died nor lost its distinctive features; it flowed with the stream of the alien faith, yet never mingled with it; though powerless to stay the sweeping tide, it had yet strength to preserve its own current unmingled; and finally, in the course of civil changes one finds it emerging once more into the light of day—white and sapless indeed, like some plant long deprived of light, feeble and undeveloped like some creature pent underground from its earliest beginnings, yet for all that alive, and preserving its distinctive character and with it a strong hold, not indeed upon the national conscience in the ordinary sense of the word, yet certainly upon the national heart and the national imagination.

What, then, was the secret of this long survival and of the strength displayed by this creed after a submergence of well-nigh thirteen centuries? It may be that its strength lay in what was also its greatest weakness. That it was but a vague system of nature and ancestor

worship made it powerless to withstand the spiritual force of the religion of Sakyamuni, yet in that same fact lay perhaps also the secret of its survival; on the spiritual side there was no resistance to make, therefore no conflict took place which could damage its prestige. On the other hand, the ingrained love of the island people for their beautiful land—the only land they had ever known—fell in well with the Shinto theory of its lovely isles being the children and the country of the heavenly gods; the fierce patriotism and the pride of race which has always been their dominant characteristic, clung fast to the tradition of the divine descent of the heavenly sovereign who represented the abstract idea of their country, torn asunder as it usually was by civil war. The ancestor worship which was the foundation of Shinto, inseparably associated as it was with these same stories of the heavenly ancestors of the throne, received fresh life and a certain moral sanction from Confucianism, which, like Buddhism, had found its way from China, and which no less than Buddhism helped to form that national code of ethics which Shinto had made no attempt to supply. For the root and flower alike of Confucian morality was filial piety and obedience to superiors in all the relations of life, together with an unreserved devotion to the worship of ancestors. With these powerful influences Buddhism in its all-embracing comprehensiveness, picked no quarrel; there was nothing to prevent the ancient ideals from remaining imbedded in the heart of the nation side by side with the imported tenets of the Buddha and perhaps deeper still than they, living on beneath the surface till the day came for that half-literary, half-political revival which culminated in the restoration of Shinto as the national religion by the revolution of 1868. The nature of the enthusiasm which had kept life in this shadowy creed through so many centuries of obscurity, had little in common with religious ardour of any normal type; it was a fierce pride and love—an apotheosis rather—of Dai Nihon, wholly apart from devotion to any spiritual being or any theological dogma. Humility formed no part of it. We read in a learned translation

that the famous Shinto theologian Hirata expresses himself as follows: "Our country, owing to the fact that it was begotten by the two gods Izanagi and Izanami, that it was the birthplace of the Sun Goddess, and that it is ruled by her sublime descendants for ever and ever so long as the universe shall endure, is infinitely superior to other nations, whose head and chief it is. Its people are honest and upright of heart, not given to useless theorising and falsehood like other nations. Thus it possesses true and correct information with regard to the origin of the universe—information transmitted to us from the age of the gods and unmixed even in the slightest degree with the unsupported notions of individuals. This is the genuine and true tradition."

So strong to this day is the sense of the divine origin of the land and its rulers that the creed which was originally, it may be, but the confused outcome of that feeling of the Divine mysteriously present behind the forces of Nature which is no less evident in the dawn of Western thought, has slowly taken the form rather of a patriotic enthusiasm, and its prominent feature is now a profound belief not so much in the divinity of those Nature forces formally the objects of its worship as in that of the country itself and its Heaven-descended ruler. Hence it is not hard to see that, devoid though it be of ethical teaching on the whole, one moral sentiment at least is inextricably entwined with Shinto—namely, an intense love of country, with a passionate feeling of devotion to the national ideal.

Shinto is essentially a religion of the family and of the hearth. As the household gods of the ancient religion of the land still kept their place of honour in the homes of Rome after the triumph of the alien creed which literary culture brought in its train, so too the family gods of Shinto were no whit dispossessed by the foreign faith which came in like manner to the Land of the Gods. As to the ancient thought of Italy, every aspect of Nature, every act of human life, was under the protection of, and in some sense identified with, some deity; and as, over and above these abstract forces, every departed ancestor

lived a shadowy life, in some manner conscious of worship and offering laid before him, in some manner likewise potential for good or ill, so too in Shinto conception, beside the myriad Nature powers and powers of surrounding common things, each family dwelt beneath the eye and in some way under the power of its departed members—they too having in their turn ascended to the ranks of the kami—good or bad as the case might be. But the ancestral kami looms far larger, more real and nearer to the living than ever did the Manes; no dim phantom he, powerless and perhaps unhappy, thankful in his comfortless shadowland for the occasional solace of garland or libation, but a power to be reckoned with, directing the fortunes of his descendants and making his influence felt through all the course of life. For all kami have a direct influence, good or bad, on the affairs of this life; the world of the living is under the control of the dead. Therefore the propitiation and worship of the departed is one of the chief duties of the Shinto believer, and no less important than his ceremonial obeisances to the bright powers of Nature, for the ancestral kami, no less than the rulers of the Heavens, are the unseen forces who direct alike the lives of men and the facts of the phenomenal world. If the ancestor was good on earth, so much the better—he is the more likely to be a kindly helper—if he was bad, he must none the less receive his due meed of reverence, so that his enmity may haply be propitiated; hence the evil kami, the earliest of whom came into this world through the visit of Izanagi the creator to the world below, receive their share of worship no less than the good. For in the Shinto system the evil in the world comes not from the gods above, but from these evil forces. “The Chinese,” says Motoori the Shintoist, according to Sir Ernest Satow, “not possessing the traditions of the divine age, are ignorant of this truth, and so driven to invent the theory of Heaven’s decrees. If Heaven could really issue decrees, it would certainly protect the good rulers and prevent bad men from seizing the power; the good would prosper and the bad would not. But in reality we find many instances of the reverse.

Whenever anything falls out amiss this is to be ascribed to the evil deities called the gods of Crookedness, whose might is so great that the Sun Goddess herself is sometimes unable to restrain them, still less can mortal man withstand them. In this way is to be explained the prosperity of evil men or the misfortunes of the good." Nevertheless, the prevalent idea concerning the kami, whether human or divine of origin, is on the whole of spirits friendly and well disposed; their presence is not thought of as a thing of dread, but of protection. Of the actual condition of these dead themselves the ideas held by Shinto seem to be somewhat shadowy. Their place of abode appears to be in no way clearly thought of or in any wise defined, yet as they have so much influence over the living, it must seem that in some vague way they are not far removed from the scenes of their earthly life. Though we hear in the story of Izanagi and Izanami of some dim Hades, some under-world conceived of as somewhere locally existing, it seems not to be the universal bourne of departed spirits, still less a place of rewards and punishments, which in the Shinto view are concerned, as it would seem, with this life only. The idea of punishment in another world is in fact wholly contradictory to the root idea of ancestor worship; the dead so honoured can hardly be conceived of as undergoing any sort of penalties in the world below; they continue to exist, but the conditions under which they live are not made known. "The spirits of the dead," says Hirata, we are told, "continue to exist in the unseen world which is everywhere about us. They all become gods of varying character and degrees of influence. Some reside in temples built in their honour; others never leave their tombs. They continue to render service to prince, parents, wife and children, as when in the body."

In the status and relative importance of these once human spirits we may again see the absence of the moral or ethical element from the religion of the kami. Not all are equal; some are very great and worshipped in gorgeous shrines by that greater family which is the nation; some are very small, known and venerated only

in their own narrow district, some worshipped only by the clapping of kindred hands at the domestic shrine. It is not by the moral character, however, of the departed that his place in the pantheon is determined. In a society so elaborately graded, so full of reverence for rank and official position as Old Japan, such a thing as equality in another life any more than in this would have been wholly inconceivable. Moral considerations not being relevant, it would seem that rank in this hierarchy of Heaven is in some way a continuation or perpetuation of rank or fame enjoyed on earth, and has its gradations accordingly—the great man becomes the great god. Certain distinguished personages receive the honour of special deification and are formally raised to divine honours by the Mikado himself. Many—most indeed—of the famous characters of Japanese history have thus been raised as it were to a peerage in the realms of the unseen; emperors and princes, scholars, warriors, statesmen—all are represented in this celestial aristocracy. The warrior Empress Jingo, her son Ojin the God of War, the famous scholar Sugawara-no-Michizane, now Tenjin Sama the patron of letters, warriors in endless numbers all through the ferocious course of history, including the famous Nobunaga and the great but not very excellent Taiko Sama himself, also Yoritomo the first, and Ieyasu the greatest of the Shoguns—he whose shrines great and small hold so conspicuous a place among the wonders of Japan—all these have received the honour of deification, and they, together with the powers of Nature and the great deities whose doings are revealed to us in the Kojiki are the gods to whose glory stand the many temples and shrines we see throughout the land. It is not difficult, therefore, to see that the meaning of “kami” by no means answers to the Western idea of “God,” though I believe “kami” is used to translate that word by some of the Christian missions, for want, I suppose, of any term which they think more suitable. But a high Shinto dignitary, who is an excellent English scholar and well read in our literature, once suggested to me—whether he was right or not I do not know—that “canonisation”

expresses more exactly than "deification" the process by which mortals are raised to the ranks of the kami.

"Follow your natural impulses and obey the Mikado's decrees." This is the well-known formula which is understood to sum up Shinto ethics—a code somewhat unexacting perhaps, but not altogether strange as the outcome of this intensely national faith. For Japan, you see, is the Land of the Gods; its islands are their children; therefore the child of the land has a heart pure and uncorrupted as becomes a son of the divine soil, and his "natural impulses" are derived from the most exalted sources. Morals, according to the Shinto theologian, are merely an invention of the Chinese, who, being an immoral people, stand in need of such guidance, but the Japanese has but to listen to the promptings of his own heart and he will act aright. Anything outside this is settled by the second half of the commandment, "Obey the Mikado's decrees." It matters no whit what these may be, their author is the actual descendant of the Heavenly Rulers, their representative and vicegerent on earth, and in obeying him Heaven is obeyed.

The gods, we are told, are the cause of every human action; so as there are gods good and bad, it would seem to follow that a man's deed as caused by them may be good or bad without involving any merit or demerit on his part. Yet certain formulæ of prayer ordered for the use of the Shinto devotee seem after all to suggest some sense of moral responsibility. For instance, a prayer to be used before the domestic altar (as translated by Sir Ernest Satow): "Reverently adoring the great gods of the two palaces of Ise in the first place, and the eight hundred myriads of celestial gods. . . . I pray with awe that they will deign to correct the unwitting faults which seen and heard by them I have committed, and blessing and favouring me according to the powers which they severally wield, will cause me to follow the divine example and perform good works in the way." So, in a prayer to the gods of the wind: "I say with awe deign to bless me by correcting the unwitting faults which seen and heard by you I have committed." The Shinto theologian Hirata

gives, we are told by the same authority, an explanation of these petitions." Evil acts, he says, are of two kinds, those which are conscious and those which are unconscious. "Every one is certain to commit accidental offences however careful he may be, and hence our ancient practice was to say: Deign to correct those failings of which I may have been guilty. But it is better to assume that we have committed such unconscious offences. If we pray that such as we have committed may be corrected, the gods are certain to pardon them." Again, in explaining a prayer to the "gods of the unseen," he says: "The most fearful crimes which a man commits go unpunished by society so long as they are undiscovered, but they draw down on him the hatred of the invisible gods. Never mind the praise or blame of men, but act so that you need not be ashamed before the gods of the unseen. If you desire to practise virtue, learn to stand in awe of the unseen, and that will prevent you from doing wrong. Make a vow to the god who rules over the unseen and cultivate the conscience implanted in you, and you will then never wander from the way." ("The unseen," by the way, as used in this passage is explained by the writer to mean peace or disturbance in the Empire, its prosperity or adversity, life or death, the good or bad fortune of human beings; in short, every supernatural event which cannot be ascribed to a definite author.) However, it would certainly seem from such passages as these that, be the gods the cause of it or not, such a thing as sin does exist and calls for pardon, though the avoidance of it does not seem to claim any very strenuous efforts on the part of the Shinto believer nor to overshadow his life with any very serious sense of responsibility. It is, after all, easily to be got rid of—the gods are sure to pardon if they are asked to do so; and is there not due provision made to this end? does not the Mikado himself, as high priest of the nation, on stated occasions perform the purification of the realm?

What, then, is the nature of the worship at a Shinto temple apart from open-air processions and pantomimic dances? If you will go to see such a temple on the occasion of a "matsuri" or festival you will see that the

ceremony consists to all appearance in the ceremonial oblation of certain offerings of food and drink presented before the inmost shrine by dignified personages attired in the quaint court robes of Old Japan, who recite in a curious sing-song voice some liturgy the while. These liturgies or "norito" are, it would seem, very numerous, and all more or less ancient, and each is thus solemnly recited on its appropriate occasion. They seem (to judge by the specimens translated by Sir E. Satow) to be scarcely prayers in the ordinary sense, but rather long and complicated invocations or mentionings of divine names no less complicated and lengthy—all apparently by way of laudation—together with a detailed enumeration of the offerings made, each being mentioned in honorific terms—forms grotesque enough to our ideas, jejune and material, wholly devoid of all we understand as the religious sentiment. They represent a stage of human thought crystallised, as it were, and arrested fourteen centuries ago, brought out to the light of day as from some museum—a body from which the spirit has long fled, like some mummy dressed in gorgeous raiment and retaining some stiff semblance of the form it bore in life. There seems little cause for wonder if the religion they embody should have no great hold as such upon the educated classes, and if its dogmas and its ceremonies are alike neglected by them. And indeed it seems obvious enough that this ancient national cult is once again falling into oblivion after a thirty years' lease of more or less galvanic life conferred on it by the Revolution. Immediately on the institution of the new order of things in 1869, great efforts were made to establish Shinto as the sole religion of the country. To this end the old edicts against Christianity were revived, all State recognition and support were withdrawn from Buddhism, and all Shinto places of worship were freed from Buddhist influence. Innumerable "Ryobu" Shinto temples—temples, that is, where Buddhist form and ornament had superseded the primitive simplicity of the Shinto style proper to the deity of the place—were "purified" by reforming zeal with disastrous results sadly visible to-day in the traces of

former splendour now wrecked or swept away, in the melancholy ruins of works of exquisite art destroyed by an iconoclastic fury not without its parallel on this side of the world, in the dusty silence now reigning in many an ancient shrine once full of life and beauty. In these early days of new Japan the Department, as it were, of Religion held an authority little inferior to that of the Government itself; but as the first zeal began to cool this Divine council became but one of many branches of the Civil Service, and afterwards sank lower still, till at the present day Shinto has lost all share in the affairs of State, except in so far as to it is committed the care of the Imperial tombs, and as it is the official religion of the Imperial family. This second waning of the star of Shinto is probably not due, as was the former one, to the brighter light of some newer faith. Rather we may see in it the inevitable consequence of the spread of the spirit of criticism and of Western ideas, the slow breaking down of anti-foreign prejudice and the growing up in its place of a desire to imitate the West, together with that nervous apprehension which seems to possess Young Japan with a feeling of shame in the presence of anything distinctively national, all which things the "progressive" spirits seem to look on as lowering their country in European eyes. You have but to mention Shinto to such an one, and you will see that your acquaintance is distinctly uncomfortable; he will smile vaguely and say something which clearly shows that he does not wish you to understand that any one takes Shinto seriously; it is in his eyes even a little barbarous, and does not go well with his frock-coat. Yet even now the ancient faith holds a certain place in the official life of the nation; the Emperor himself, it is edifying to know, still performs in the awful seclusion of the palace rites of profound solemnity on certain stated days, when the high officials are expected to attend without reference to their own personal views on such matters. Such occasions are the days of the offering to the deities of Ise of the first rice of the year, the festival of Jimmu Tenno, the reigning Emperor's birthday, and certain commemorations of the

Imperial ancestors. These days are holidays for the people at large, though not days for visiting temples or performing any special religious rites, seeing that all that has been done much more effectively on behalf of the nation by the Emperor; they are simply days for more or less merrymaking and for decorating one's front gate with the red and white flag of Great Japan. On certain days, too, one may see officials of the Court and Government in full European uniform attending the services officially held at the Shokonsha in Tokyo, that new and not overpoweringly beautiful shrine in which are invoked the spirits of those who fell on the Imperial side in the war of the Revolution and in the Satsuma rebellion. At Ise, moreover, on the great festivals there, an Imperial envoy with military escort, all in European dress and nothing if not modern to behold, represents the Son of Heaven at the august temple of his divine ancestress. To the foreign onlooker the spectacle of the official recognition thus accorded to so obviously primitive a faith in a country undeniably civilised and rapidly becoming one of the Powers of the world may be not a little amazing; when he sees a number of gentlemen in European dress arriving in European carriages and gravely assisting at the archaic ceremonies conducted in this temple carefully constructed on the model of the primeval hut by a Government which also builds ironclads of the latest pattern, he can scarcely fail to wonder at the survival of so primitive a faith under such wholly incongruous conditions. And it may be indeed—nay, it probably is certainly the case that on its theological side Shinto is hopelessly discredited, that not one of these gorgeous personages has any sort of belief in the gods he is supposed to be worshipping. But the theological side of Shinto is only its body, as it were; whether that be dead or not, its soul, which has a life of its own quite independent of any very clearly defined beliefs about the gods, is undeniably alive in the hearts of the people, high and low alike. When we look back on the story of the genesis of the fair isles of Japan and of their divine rulers in heaven and on earth, and consider this too, how

many of these supernatural powers are the great figures of the nation's history, names round which so many associations cluster, some honoured, perhaps even loved for noble deeds done or for benefits conferred, others, perhaps, names only of fear, yet all alike inseparably bound up with the story of the nation's life, we may cease from much of our wonder at the survival of Shinto. So looking at it, moreover, we may find less to reproach in its lack of ethical teaching, seeing that



A RYOBU SHINTO TORII.

after all it is scarcely fair to say, as is so often said, that it is "no religion." For a religion in the ordinary sense of the word it makes little or no pretence to be. If it be one in any sense, the god of its present-day worship at least is nothing more or less than "Great Japan"; it is patriotism expressed in terms of theology and raised by the influence of the supernatural to a higher power than the feebler sentiment which bears that name with us. The gods may be dead and all their wonders with them, yet the many centuries of their worship have not passed

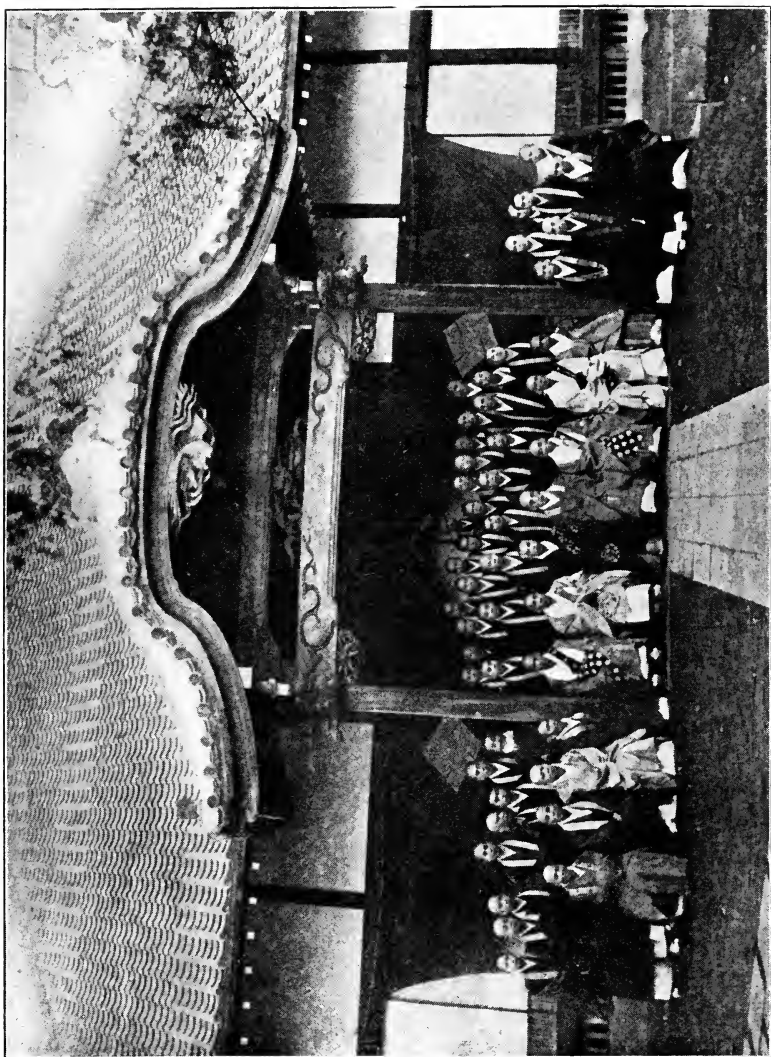
away without leaving their traces on the national character. All the legends of these divine personages, all the devotion paid to their once human companions, all the self-sacrificing loyalty of feudal times, are now merged in this enthusiasm which is the saving grace of Young Japan amongst so many—probably temporary—less attractive traits. This is the real essence, the soul of Shinto to-day, living extinguishable in every heart behind all the quaint legends now fading so quickly away; this gives its inviolable sanctity to the crumbling little “miya” alone among the rice-fields at home, this nerves the dapper little soldier to his prodigies of valour in the battlefields abroad. It may well be that Amaterasu and all her divine train shall pass away and be forgotten, but till their heroic spirit has vanished from her people it can never be truly said that the spirit of Shinto has wholly fled.

CHAPTER IV

BUDDHIST RITES AND SECTS

I CAME here (Narita) a few days ago, because in the course of my ramblings in this country I have got very much interested in the subject of Buddhism, and this is one of the famous places wherein its externals at least may be seen. So I left Tokyo, greatly daring, by an evening train, the other night, and made my way here alone. The journey is supposed to take two hours, but as the train starts from a station miles from anywhere, it takes nearly as long to get there, so I missed my train and had to wait for an evening one, which did not bring me here till past nine o'clock at night. I do not greatly care for a night journey in Japan, especially if one has to change anywhere, because of the absolute hopelessness of ever finding out where one has got to. I am sure if it had not been for the paternal attentions of the little guard I should never have got here at all, seeing that the Roman name of no single station ever once came in view of my carriage window. I knew I had to change at Sakura—Cherry Blossom—very prettily suggestive indeed, but how to know when one got there? especially as I had been foolish enough to go first class, and consequently there was no one in the carriage whom I might ask. However, I arrived at last, in spite of all the malignity of the Chinese character, and took the usual plunge into the darkness with my two rickshaws. It is well for one's peace of mind on these occasions that one knows the Japanese are harmless and civilised, otherwise it might be a little disconcerting to be whirled off in this way,

oneself in one rickshaw and one's belongings in another, away into illimitable darkness. This time my devious way led by a steep hill, down which we galloped recklessly, never stopping to think how, going at such a pace, we could possibly pull up, should occasion arise, with the weight of a foreign woman about the height of Fujisan behind. Nobody thought either of murdering or even overcharging me; and so unaccustomed, apparently, were the men to foreigners, that they only asked their right fare, which amounted to about twopence for each rickshaw. My inn is a very amusing one, of purely native type; in fact, everything here is purely native, as I discovered next day when I attempted to buy biscuits in the village and found that nobody in the place had ever heard of such a thing. I had imagined that it would be a place frequented by tourists and that it would be unnecessary to bring anything to eat from Tokyo. But I have seen no tourists at all, and I don't think they can be much in the way of coming here, otherwise I should not attract so much attention. The people of this inn, at least, are evidently quite unused to foreigners and greatly delighted with my singular manners and attire. They cannot ask me questions enough, just as though one were in the depths of the country instead of two hours from Tokyo; my movements are a subject of the profoundest interest; whenever I venture to go out I am sent off with adjurations to "go slowly" and take care of myself, and when I come safely in again the bows and congratulations and the chorus of "O kaeri"—"Honourable returning"—are positively embarrassing. I could get nothing even semi-foreign to eat, not so much as a Japanese imitation of an English biscuit wherewith to stay the cravings of a foreign appetite after many meals of rice and seaweed and biological problems. Some of the dishes they give one here remind me of the days when one did laboratory work and got a little pick of something unknown in a little dish, its nature to be discovered by hook or crook. The inn is directly opposite the hill on which the temple stands, so that I get the full benefit of all the bell-ringing, &c., involved by the various pious observances. The



GROUP OF BUDDHIST ECCLESIASTICS.



first morning, at about half-past four, I heard, as I lay snug among my "futons," the heavy sound of the temple bell booming through the darkness for some early function. It was rather a struggle, but remembering that this was what I had come for, and also knowing that there is little peace for the sluggard in Japan after his inn is once awake, I got heroically up and made my darksome way to the temple along with crowds of native worshippers, who did not seem to think the hour at all inconveniently early, as it seemed to me to be, whose motive was not devotion but curiosity. We went up to the main temple through several elaborate though rather shabby gates, whose flamboyant decorations showed faintly in the glimmering light of early dawn, through curious and bristly surroundings whose exact nature I could not make out in the dim twilight. (It turned out afterwards that the approach was lined with very fantastic rockwork stuck all over with inscribed tablets and other votive objects in great numbers.) At last, at the top of a long flight of very steep stairs, came the last gate, adorned with the very largest paper lantern I ever saw—it was more like a balloon than an ordinary lantern. Inside was the usual court, crowded with worshippers hurrying to take off their sandals on the strip of matting laid down outside the shrine. Up the steps rushed my fellow-pilgrims, many of them seeming to be in a state of wild excitement, and quite a number blowing unearthly strains on huge conch shells as they came—I suppose as a contribution to the solemnity of the occasion. Inside, the building (which was not very large) was arranged for the performance of the "Goma" ceremony—the litany of fire. Nearly the whole of the side opposite the door was taken up by a huge and much decorated altar of black and red and gold, looming mysterious through the darkness, above which stood an image of Fudo (never a very prepossessing divinity to look at) and a great number of flowers and lights. Between it and the door was a large square dais of black lacquer, slightly raised above the level of the floor and railed off. It was covered with ornaments and mysterious-looking utensils,

and in the midst was a square metal arrangement on which lay a heap of little pieces of wood arranged crossways for the fire, and a number of little metal dishes like saké cups. When I first looked into it the building was empty, save for an attendant or two busy with the lights, but presently a troop of fourteen or fifteen ecclesiastics of all ages, some of them looking little more than boys, came in and knelt in a row in front of the daïs. All were dressed in gorgeous vestments of brocade, but what struck me as odd was that no two were wearing the same colour, which gave rather a motley look to the group. Some instrumentalists came in also, and sitting down in the shadows by the altar, began to wail depressingly, one of the instruments being the conch so much affected by the congregation on their own account outside. Next we of the laity came in in troops and disposed ourselves on the mats wherever there was room. I got a place next to the altar, somewhat to my embarrassment, but the only thing to do was to keep quite still; and to the credit of the assembled devotees be it recorded that they never took the slightest notice of the presence of a foreigner. Everybody squatted in solemn silence, reciting his rosary inaudibly. Presently the solemnities began, the ecclesiastics chanting rapidly together in unison. After this chanting had gone on for some time a still more imposing personage arrived, escorted across the court by quite a procession, and with an umbrella carried over his head by an attendant (this, I suppose, was for dignity only, seeing that the morning was nearly dark and perfectly dry). He wore a wonderful erection on his head, apparently made of cloth of gold and in shape something between a bishop's mitre and the sort of headdress usually associated here with "Nô" dancing. I presume that he was a bishop and that it was a mitre, or, at least, that he and it were respectively the Buddhist equivalents of both. Apropos I must remark that it is very hard to find English words by which to speak of Buddhist personages and paraphernalia. It seems to be the custom to transfer to them words in use in the Christian Church, *e.g.*, priest, monk, nun, altar,

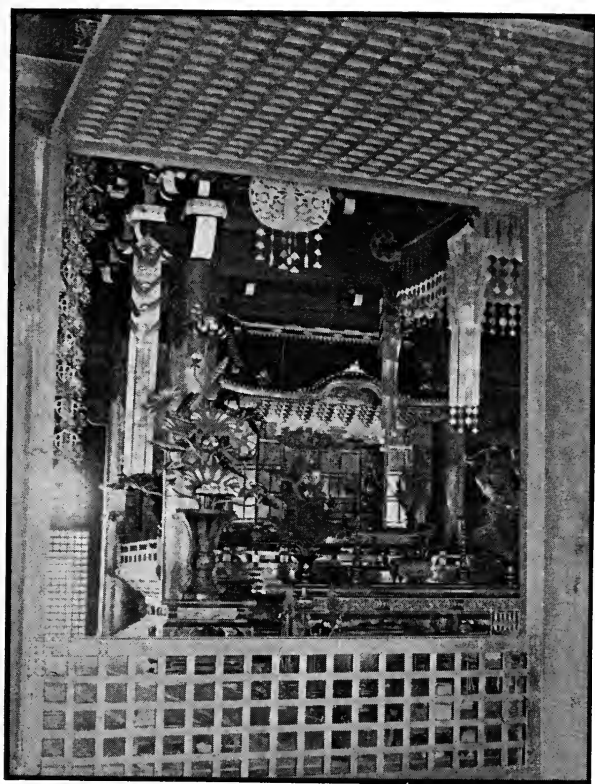
&c., which of course is in one way absurd, as the words thus used must necessarily bear a meaning quite different from their proper one. At the same time, certain superficial resemblances are so great that it is easy to see how the custom of using these and similar words has arisen. They are obviously convenient; there are no English words which would express these Buddhist things, and to use the Japanese ones—even if one knew them—would be always pedantic and generally unintelligible. There is certainly the word “bonze” which can be used instead of “priest,” but it seems rather literary than colloquial, and it does not help one out of the difficulty with other things. So, in speaking about these Buddhist ceremonies, I shall have to use these words, only you will observe that I do not use them in their ordinary sense, and do not wish to suggest any unseemly connection of ideas.

Well, this tremendous personage took up his position in front of the row of priests, and began with immense energy to recite something in a sing-song voice, at the same time setting a light to the fire laid in the midst of the daïs, which blazed up fiercely in a moment and gave out a sweet scent as of burning cedar-wood. As the office went on the fire was fed with the liquid contained in the little saucers standing round; perhaps it was saké, I do not know, but in any case it blazed fiercely, and was never allowed to die down, though the devotions were rather lengthy; now the bishop or abbot, or whatever he was, intoning alone, now all the assistants chanting together to the woebegone strains of the orchestra behind. The effect of this function, held as it was in the darkness of the early dawn, was picturesque in the highest degree; the deep shadows of the temple only partly dispelled by the soft light of the candles and the fitful gleaming of the sacred fire, which glittered on the gorgeous raiment of the officiating clergy, half hiding, half revealing the throng of worshippers as they prostrated themselves around the altar in an ecstasy of devotion.

This solemnity was repeated at midday and at five in the afternoon; I do not know whether with exactly the

same rites, but each included the "Goma" ceremony. The midday one, in the bright, matter-of-fact sunlight, fell considerably behind the early morning observances in point of picturesqueness, but the vespers, or whatever they were, which began in the late afternoon and did not end till all the world was dark again, had almost the same weird impressiveness as had the function of the dawn. At this ceremony little baskets of votive cakes were offered by the worshippers with tremendous enthusiasm; they were piled up beforehand on stands by the gate, and the people, as they rushed up the steps, blowing madly on their conches, fairly pounced upon them and carried them off. What the meaning of these baskets was I did not discover. After the ceremony was over and the clergy had withdrawn, a large proportion of the congregation remained behind to draw consecrated lots and buy charms and amulets, and I stayed to watch them. If you wanted to know what fortune awaited you in the dimness of the future, you went to an old priest who was sitting at the side of the temple, and he, for a consideration, I suppose, rattled for you a cylindrical box containing long strips of wood. One of these he would pull out after prayers and incantations duly muttered, and on this, if you could read it, you would find your fate inscribed. This seemed to be a very popular form of divination, and I observed that the old priest had plenty of customers. Others, again, were buying objects of piety, mostly cheap printed kakemono with pictures of Fudo and plans of the temple on them, also charms—"o fuda"—long strips of wood inscribed with texts, which I noticed had been previously blessed by passing them through the sacred fire while the ceremony was in progress. Some people made quite extensive purchases, and I learned much by observing the way they tied them up in silk handkerchiefs to take away (for nothing in the world is neater than the way a Japanese will tie up a parcel, whether in paper or in silk).

The "Goma" ceremony was not the only form which devotion took at this temple; it expressed itself in various ways besides. When I was there in the middle of the day many of the faithful were performing the meritorious



A BUDDHIST ALTAR.



work of running a hundred times round the verandah which surrounds the main temple, with a view, I believe, to the obtaining of something corresponding more or less to what is known as an indulgence on our side of the world. There were also buildings set apart for purposes of retreat (or something analogous to what is understood in Europe by that expression), wherein, I am told, the devotees occupy themselves entirely with fasting and prayer. But as it seems to me there is ample opportunity for the former, at least, when one is in country places in Japan, I feel no desire personally to investigate these "danjiki do."

I have done very little since last mail; nothing, indeed, except that I have been to see a festival at the Buddhist temple of Ikegami. That was something rather out of the common in the way of a religious observance, I will admit. But the longer one stays in this country the more clearly one sees that the line which divides the sacred from what we call the secular is no hard and fast one here as it is with us. To the Western religious idea there are two worlds, the material and the spiritual, or, as people say, "this world and the next," and the gulf between them to the popular mind is nothing if not broad and deep. In any case, thoughts connected with the unseen sphere of existence usually bring with them so much of awe that one can hardly think of any one joining sincerely in any kind of religious observance without being at the same time in a more or less serious frame of mind—at least, the ordinary Briton cannot. But with the Buddhist this is not so. To him there is but one life, and that is practically unending; only under differing outward forms its age-long course goes on—this present existence is only an episode; there is no sharp distinction. We who go to the matsuri to-day have lived in this mortal world for ages past, and shall go on doing so till that far-off day when our reincarnations shall cease and our activities be absorbed in that final Peace which seems to the ordinary Western mind so indistinguishable from annihilation. There is no break; when this particular

life is at an end its tendencies will reappear and reanimate another body in this same world of phenomena. We are consequently quite at home in the next world; we have been there often enough; it is all in the day's work and a matter of course, and there is nothing about it to awe one into seriousness or solemnity. We are doing quite right in going to the matsuri, of course; it will go to the credit side of our account in the matter of karma—or "ingwa," as we call it here—so we may enjoy ourselves with an easy mind. Moreover, you must remember we are not Buddhists only; we are Japanese, and therefore Shintoists, and the interval in Shinto thought between the human and the non-human or divine is no less vague than to pure Buddhist beliefs is the boundary between this life and the next. Anything almost may be a kami; they are all round us, and we are familiar with them as part of our daily life; the dead are alive to us and live with us, and there is nothing terrifying in the thought. So, you see, both our formal theology and our inherited race-beliefs all go to weaken that sense of awe in the presence of the unseen which makes a religious observance a thing which is, or ought to be, serious in Great Britain. Accordingly there is nothing incongruous in the combination of picnicking with prayers; it is, in fact, quite the normal thing, and the Ikegami festival is rather a striking case in point.

I went to the—I was going to say picnic—quite early in the morning along with hosts of Japanese worshippers, or merry-makers, whichever you please to call them. The sun shone, the sky was blue, the air was like the elixir of life, the scenery was charming, and altogether the conditions were highly favourable for a picnic—as one's Japanese fellow-pilgrims seemed also to think—and the beautiful woods surrounding the innumerable buildings connected with the temple were gay with laughing crowds of holiday-makers, all in gala attire. In the main building when I arrived I found some grand function going on. The temple itself was highly decorated, and filled with every kind of ornament and object of piety it is possible to imagine—many of them more than verging on the

tawdry. In it a number of gorgeous personages were chanting, with much beating of drums, before a gaily bedecked altar, resplendent with coloured lacquer and gilded ornaments. Behind them knelt the worshippers, or rather, to be strictly accurate, into the space behind the merry-makers from outside passed continually; they came in with a smile to prostrate themselves for a moment before the altar, cast into the huge chest the usual contribution of one "cash," finger their rosary for a moment while they repeated the mystic formula of the sect, and so up and out again, still smiling as before. As often as not, I observed, Heaven did not get the whole of the devotee's attention; even in this short space half of it was devoted to conversation with the friends with whom they came in, or to salutations of others met inside. This is not peculiar, however, to the light-hearted festival of Ikegami; one may see the same thing in buildings of the severest sects, of which this is by no means one. The devotee comes in and kneels before the altar, bowing low, and begins to pray with fervour. Presently another enters and does the same. They recognise each other; instantly the prayers stop, and the worshippers make to each other precisely the same reverence they have just made to the altar; then a little smiling conversation, then a little more devotion, and so on. But here at Ikegami, on the feast of the saintly Nichiren, prayer and devotion are a very small part of the day's work. No, the real object with which all we thousands have come is fun. For there is plenty of it in the wide temple grounds; peep-shows and tumblers and performing monkeys, and everything else you can imagine, right under the very temple itself, and all without offence to the sanctities within. Indeed, within or without makes little difference; from the temple, open as it stands on the whole of one side, we can see what goes on outside; and from the outside, as one enjoys the fair, one can see the altar and the highly coloured officiants inside. So the day went on; we bought a lot of charms and amulets warranted to save us from all human ills; we saw a little piety and a great deal of tumbling and conjuring, a dog and a cat playing

chess together, and a number of other edifying sights, over and above the charming groups of happy simple folk in holiday array, and the all-surrounding beauty of Japan, now gorgeous in her autumn robe of flaming maple leaves.

This temple belongs to the "Nichiren" sect, whose temples one soon gets to know by their tawdry look, full as they always are of tinsel and paper adornments, ex-votos of all sorts, eyes and hands and hearts of wax and wood, just such as one may see any day in Southern Europe; pictures, too, of the same kind and on much the



A BUDDHIST FUNERAL IN HUMBLE LIFE.

same level of art, and images about as artistic as the pictures, and with a notable suggestion of the common conception of an "idol" about them; the whole building, in fact, littered up with every kind of pious rubbish and holy gewgaw. Yet this form of Buddhism seems to appeal very strongly to the masses; its followers are numerous and enthusiastic, and, unlike the rest of the Buddhist world, show a highly militant spirit, together with a profound contempt for the views of the other sects, and a low opinion of their spiritual prospects.

I see by your last letter I have given you a very low idea of Buddhism as a religion by telling you of what I saw at Narita, and at the festival at Ikegami that I went to when I was in Tokyo. You say it seems to be "all images and incantations," and you wonder why such a system of "childish idolatry" should interest me, or why I should wish to have anything to do with it. Well, I do not wish to have anything to do with it—if you mean by that playing at "being a Buddhist," as some Europeans like to do; I am not inquiring into it as a possible religion for myself. But seeing that there is in point of fact a good deal more in it than the idols and incantations you speak of, I confess it does attract me as a study, and, indeed, it seems natural enough that one should feel it interesting to be brought into contact with a system so ancient, and which has been the guide of so many millions of the human race, and which has, moreover, the dignity of an austere philosophy and, in theory at least, of a high moral code. Besides, Buddhism varies almost infinitely with the country in which one sees it, and in that country with the sect whose rites one sees. So here in Japan; what I have told you applies to the externals of certain Buddhist sects. But they are not all; of the largest and most living sect I have told you nothing.

Yet only last Wednesday I spent a very long time in one of their temples, watching a ceremony of some sort, and listening to a sermon of a length which might have satisfied the most exacting of our Covenanting forefathers. To be sure, I did not go for the purpose of hearing it, but I happened to go into the great Hongwanji temple here (Kyoto) and found it going on. This building always attracts me by reason of its solemn magnificence, the grace and majesty of its architecture—simple and severe for all its grandeur. Its general effect is plain and unadorned, yet there is in it a considerable amount of ornament, notably the gilded wood carving of the ventilating panels which fill the space between the ceiling and the top of the golden chancel-screen—figures of angels with musical instruments, among flowers and

foliage, all beautifully done. The altar is of black lacquer, richly adorned with fine gilded metal work, and behind it the whole wall is covered with mighty lotus-flowers painted in the colours of nature on a gold ground. On it is no great crowd of ornaments—nothing, I think, but a standing figure of Amida, a pair of lamps, and two vases of artificial lotuses in gilded bronze; and there is absolutely nothing else in the chancel at all but a low desk before the altar with a few books upon it. This temple, like many others of the same sect, is, as it were, double; there is the temple proper, which I have just been describing, and another on much the same plan, only rather smaller and much plainer. This is connected with the main temple by a covered corridor, and is used for preaching; as a rule, sermons are disrespectfully relegated to this subsidiary building, called the “Amida do”—hall of Amida. When I went into the main temple I saw there was something going on by the perfect sea of straw and wooden sandals lying outside. Of course I had seen many such ceremonies in different places, but you have not, so I may as well describe to you what I saw this time. Inside, the huge building was filled with worshippers kneeling all over the floor, from the door right up to the chancel rails. (A Buddhist temple, by the way, is arranged on a plan exactly the opposite of that usual in Christian churches; instead of having the high altar at one of the ends or shorter sides of the building, it is invariably in the middle of one of the longer sides, so that the nave and chancel are both much wider than they are deep.) When I went in, three or four priests were chanting one of those long things which sound like litanies, but which, I am told, are more of the nature of hymns, the congregation listening devoutly (though I believe what is being said is quite as unintelligible to them as to me), and reciting on their rosary chaplets the endless invocation, “Namu Amida Butsu”—“Nam’ Am’da Buts’.” The chanting, as usual with this sect, was rather pleasing, and on this occasion the demeanour of the priests and people was serious and reverential, which is not always the case. Presently the chanting

ceased, and the ceremony ended with the reading of a portion of the Buddhist scriptures by one of the officiating priests. After it was over, most of the people went off to the "Amida do," and I followed them, not because I hoped to profit greatly by the sermon, but because it always interests me to watch a Japanese assemblage, no matter how employed. I do not know whether he was a popular preacher that day or not, but in any case, when I had managed to get my superfluously large person through the sliding-doors without calling too much attention to the presence of a foreigner, I found the preaching-hall as full as the temple had been; men and women of the respectable lower and middle class, even one or two of the men in foreign clothes, sitting listening apparently with all their ears. The preacher was, as usual, sitting, not in any pulpit, or anything corresponding to one, but on the edge of a low, matted platform raised a foot or two from the floor. He was a very young priest, smooth of face, and with that look of being fair-complexioned which nearly all Buddhist priests have—I cannot think why, unless it is that their shaven heads have in the distance the effect of fair hair, as contrasted with the bristly shocks of black on the heads of the laity. He wore a violet stole, or something very like one, over a white garment of some sort, and sat cross-legged on the edge of his platform. He preached very quietly, in a conversational voice which he never seemed to raise, and which was yet distinctly audible all over the large hall, and wore a very pleasant little smile on his face the whole time. No gesticulation or "pulpit action" of any kind; he merely sat smiling and talking away, with his hands in his lap. The congregation, as usual, punctuated the discourse with the never-failing "Namu Amida." This formula seems to be appropriate to any pious sentiment whatsoever. "All men are hopelessly sinful." Groans of "Namu Amida Butsu." "There is no hope but in Amida." "Namu Amida Butsu." "But you have only to believe and you are saved." "Namu Amida Butsu," and so on. Nearly everything the preacher said was received with a fervent

though quite low-voiced chorus of "Namu Amida." I stayed for a long time, but when the preacher got apparently to "rokuban"—"sixthly"—and showed no signs of coming to an end, I had to beat a weak-kneed retreat.

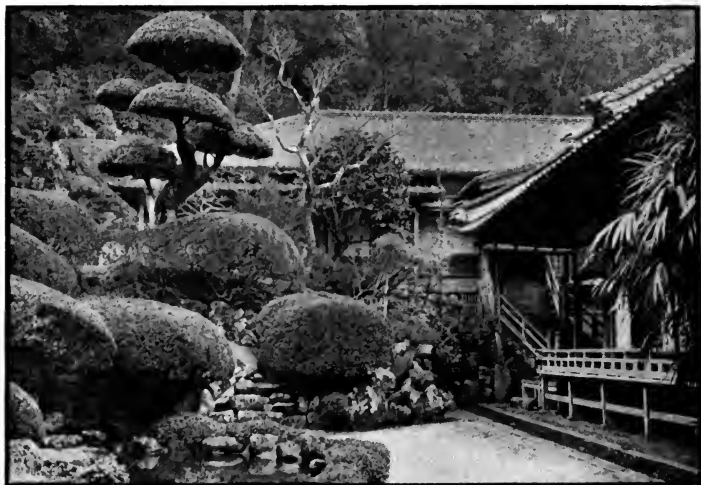
As for the pictures you have seen in some book of the Buddhist gods of Japan, and which have given you so low an opinion of this religion, let me tell you that these gods of the popular belief are no part of Buddhism proper—that is, of the teaching of the Buddha. He, as I understand it, swept on one side all the gods many and lords many of Brahmanism. His system, indeed, as explained by himself, postulated no personal Supreme Being at all, whether one or many. No deity interferes with the course of events in this world; such supernatural beings as exist are wholly unconcerned with its government; they sit apart, like the gods of Lucretius, in divine unconcern.

Sakyamuni, the Buddha, here called Shaka, appeared on earth, it would seem, some five-and-twenty centuries ago as the son of an Indian king. Great hopes of future glory centred in him, and he was guarded by an anxious father from all knowledge of the pain and sorrow of the world; of death and sickness he was to know nothing, but to live in a palace of delights. But the soul of the Buddha could not thus be chained to earth; at last he heard the voice of destiny. The legends tell us how he came to the knowledge of sorrow and death, and how he resolved to give up all, and seek in poverty and weariness for the hidden truth which should save the world. So he made the "Great Renunciation," and tearing himself from home and wife and new-born child, he wandered forth a lonely mendicant to seek, he knew not where or how, that light he knew not of, yet which he felt must somewhere indeed be found, by which the world might be saved. We hear of the austerities, the fastings, and the toils he underwent; how he turned in disgust from the bloody sacrifices of the Hindu ritual and the futile self-tortures of its devotees; how at last, faint and worn, abandoned by his disciples, and near to death, he sat down to meditate under a certain tree, and how there,

after some mysterious struggle, he found that light, not from without, but from within, and so entered into Buddhahood.

What, then, was this secret, what was this light which, as it seemed to him, was to lighten every man? It amounted to this: that suffering is the one fact common to all life, that suffering has its root in ignorance, that desire is the cause of life, and that life is neither a reality nor a blessing. The impermanence and the unreality of all things—this is the keynote of his teaching. And the hope for mankind is to escape from these conditions and to attain to Nirvana—to a state of sinless calm, void of passion and sensation—to the absorption of the finite and the personal in the impersonal and the Infinite—which state is to be attained by the search for knowledge, by the avoidance of sin, by a rigorous self-culture carried on, if necessary, through an indefinite number of earthly lives, by walking in the holy path, whose chief commandment is universal charity—boundless love and compassion for all living things. And for him who would walk in the stony road which leads to this heaven of abstraction there is no hand stretched forth to help; there is no God, no power outside himself to whom he may cry for aid, on whose help he may rely; he must, in the strictest sense, “work out his own salvation.” Cause and effect are the rulers of the Universe in the natural world, and in the human spirit no less; that which is done is done, and its effects must go on unceasingly till the force of the original deed is spent at last. Every sin brings its evil consequences, and these must be lived out in life; hence life is, in a sense, a punishment. The vibrations set up, as it were, by one act of sin must go on for ever, till the force that gave rise to them is exhausted. Good and evil done in life leave these waves of tendency inevitably behind them; the sins done in one body live again in another; the soul dies not with the body, but lives again and again till the last and highest stage is reached, when desire is dead and the evil karma—the psychical vibration, as it were, resulting from sin—has sunk to rest. Then desire, and

with its life and sorrow, may cease at last, and the soul passes into peace. No god or demon can alter a single link in the remorseless chain of causation; the salvation of the individual must be worked out by himself alone, there is none to aid, whether mortal or immortal; he is his own only helper, there is no room for prayer. The sin once sinned abides; there is no forgiveness, nor any place of repentance; its consequences must abide to the end. A hard and merciless faith, I suppose you will say, which can only breed despair. But you will observe that never-



IN THE GARDEN OF AN ANCIENT BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

theless there is no soul that does not have a chance. The effects of sin remain, truly, and there is no remission; the penalty must be paid to the uttermost farthing, if not in this life then in another and yet another, but still it may be paid in the end. There is hope for all; it is but a question of time—long and weary, no doubt, yet not eternal. In the end evil may be trampled out, and salvation attained by all. Salvation!—a familiar word, but here with an unfamiliar meaning. For with the evil karma—with the results of

sin—personality, consciousness—life, in short, as we understand the word—go out also; the perfected man—the Buddha—does not, indeed, cease to exist, but he ceases to be conscious of his existence, for his personality is gone, his finite being is reabsorbed into the Infinite; “the dewdrop sinks into the shining sea.” It seems, indeed, that apart from its ethical and practical side the teaching of the Buddha was the foundation less of a religion as we understand the word than of a philosophy, and a philosophy, moreover, tending altogether to nihilism. So far as it has a positive side, it holds up to its votaries an object of desire wholly contrary to normal Western aspiration; the cessation, that is to say, of that consciousness whose continuance has been the object of almost universal longing with our race; the golden hope which it sets before mankind as the reward of so toilsome a journey is a state where sorrow and sighing shall indeed have passed away, not because it is one where there shall be no more death, but one where there shall be no more life.

That a religion so abstract, so cold, so devoid of colour and of emotion, holding out so chilly a hope, and that so long deferred, should ever have inspired whole nations with a burning enthusiasm, seems to the ordinary Western mind a little hard to be understood. We are, of course, all familiar enough with views in no way very unlike those of the Buddha on the Western side of the world. But we are accustomed to look on them less as religion than as its negation; in any case they do not inspire devotional enthusiasm or urge men to forsake the world for the religious life. But in the speculative, impersonally minded East it was far otherwise, and the doctrine of the Buddha numbered its votaries by hundreds and thousands, and his order increased and flourished exceedingly; men counted the world well lost for the yellow robe and begging-bowl of the shaven monk, if so be that by assuming them they might but attain a little sooner to deliverance from the troublesome burden of conscious existence. At the same time it would seem that in the teaching of the Buddha, negative as it was in the main,

some loophole yet was left by which a warmer light might shine upon the human soul. For we learn that in the last stage of his ministry he seems to have come back to the conception of a supreme Being, remote indeed and far beyond mortal ken, yet still positively existent and in a sense personal. Buddhas there were, more than one—that is, souls made perfect and entered into rest; but all, according to this view, were but manifestations or incarnations of the one Absolute Mind present throughout all things, who is called the Buddha of Original Existence, a conception which, so far as it goes, clearly corresponds to that known to us as God.

Accordingly, after the Teacher had entered into the Great Peace his followers began to recognise two schools of thought; those known respectively as the Lesser and the Greater Vehicles—vehicle being here a body of doctrine on which they who believe in it may be borne surely upwards from the miseries of life to safety and perfection—a revelation professing to be more authoritative than that “best and most irrefragable of human notions,” which to the dying Socrates seemed a raft upon which a man may voyage “not without risk if he cannot find some word of God which will more safely and surely carry him.” The Lesser Vehicle, which is said by its adherents more purely to represent the teachings of the Buddha, is that which is followed in Ceylon and Burma; the Greater is the form which prevailed in Northern Asia, and it is this which eventually reached Japan by way of China. Some authorities say it is an “illegitimate development” of the teachings of the Buddha; others that it but represents the higher plane of thought and enlightenment to which the Teacher rose as the years of his ministry went on. It is referred to the latest period of his life, and is said to contain a distinctly theistic element. In any case it is this “Greater Vehicle” which has come to Japan and which has there developed into something curiously unlike what one may see in Burma or Ceylon.

Of course, like everything else, Buddhism came to Japan from China through Korea. In China itself the



BUDDHIST DEVOTIONS.

"Greater Vehicle" had arrived about the time of the Christian era, some six centuries or more after the Nirvana of the Teacher. There it suffered certain modifications, as one might expect, seeing the wide difference between the dreamy, metaphysical mind of India and the nothing if not prosaic and practical mind of China. There new sects arose, and it was missionaries from these sects who at last, in the sixth century of our era, brought to Japan the name and message of the Buddha.

As for the ethical teaching which accompanied the teaching of the Buddha it, like that teaching itself, is far too complicated a subject for me to discuss, seeing that it demands the study of a lifetime rather than a few remarks even in the longest of letters or by a person who, unlike myself, should be thoroughly conversant with the subject. But its chief precepts, as they were formulated by these early sects of the Greater Vehicle who sent their message to the islands of the Rising Sun, are to be found in five prohibitions and ten commandments given to the lowest of the four classes into which the Buddhist community is supposed to be divided. These classes are: first, learners or catechumens, then the instructed class, next the Bodhisattva—in Japanese Bosatsu—those who are so far on the road to perfection that one more birth will bring them to Buddhahood—and lastly the just made perfect—the Buddha, or, in Japanese, Hotoke. To the first class, then, are given the elementary commands. Five things are first forbidden—all taking of life, all theft, lewdness, lying, and all intoxicants. Ten positive commands are, as it were, corollaries from these—they enjoin such things as mercy, liberality, charity, truth. These, we are told, are the elementary precepts of the faith—the milk of babes; but surely a life which should be consistently modelled on these principles would have reached no very despicable level.

But if this be so, what, you will say, about all these pictures of Japanese gods and goddesses which have so moved your wrath, and the elaborate rites and super-

stitious observances I have seen by the score and tried to describe to you? If this be Buddhism, is the religion of Japan Buddhism at all or something quite different? Well, it may be that the air on those philosophic mountain peaks where trod the Buddha was too thin and cold for the breathing of the natural man; in any case his faith has taken upon itself such changes in passing from age to age and from land to land that one almost wonders if the Teacher would know it for his own were he to revisit the glimpses of the moon.

It was in the sixth century of our era that the name of Buddha was first heard in Japan. In the first half of that century it is said that some private person brought from China an image of the Teacher and set it up in a cottage. But no particular result seems to have flowed from this. Religion, like everything else in Japan, must, it would seem, find its way from above downwards; and had its kindling been left to private hands it seems not impossible that the "Light of Asia" would never have shone in Yamato. But in the reign of the Mikado Kimmei the torch was lighted afresh; this time in the more congenial atmosphere of the court. For in the reign of that Emperor—in the year 552, it is said, of our era—a Korean King sent to him as a present an image of Buddha and certain of the sacred writings. The Son of Heaven was inclined to look upon the new teaching with favour, and gave the image into the care of his prime minister. But the Kami—the ancient gods of the land—were displeased, it would seem, by this intrusion, and in their wrath they sent a pestilence upon the capital. So the image of the Buddha was cast into the sea, and the little temple which had been built for it was levelled with the ground. But these deeds of sacrilege were in their turn followed by direful signs, the opponents of the new light were covered with confusion, and before very long Buddhism became the religion of the court. The female Mikado, Suiko Tenno, and her famous prime minister, known as Shotoku Taishi, were great devotees of the new faith. So great, indeed, was the energy of Prince Shotoku that the teaching of the Buddha soon became a

power in the land, and passing outwards from the court, took its place as the religion of the people, bringing with it art and letters and all the influences of civilisation. But still there was a distinct clash between the Kami and the Buddhas; between the native cult and the alien creed. Here, then, we come to the subject of the Buddhist gods whose portraits you have seen. Sakyamuni the Buddha—Shaka as they call him here—knew no gods at all. But Brahmanism, which was the soil out of which the tree of his religion grew, knew many an one, and by slow degrees the old beliefs crept back under other names into the new faith after his death, and the ancient gods appeared again under the form of divine or semi-divine personages, some personifications of various abstractions—attributes, as we should say, of Deity—others perfected human beings, such as Siddhartha or Gautama himself, till at last his system of philosophical abstraction resolved itself in the popular mind into the worship of these “Buddhas,” who had come to be looked on as personal gods. This tendency was strongest, it would appear, in that Great Vehicle or Northern form of Buddhism which was that which came to Japan, and this heavenly hierarchy was well developed within it or ever it reached the shores of the Rising Sun. But you will observe that the word “god” as applied to them is scarcely used in its ordinary meaning, and also that with Buddhism as taught by Buddha they have absolutely nothing to do. Such divinities are those whose names in Japanese are Fudo, Jizo, Kwannon, whom one gets to know so well in the temples here; Fudo terrible among his flames (which symbolise wisdom, not that he is the “god of fire,” as people so often think), Jizo the compassionate helper of those who are in trouble and especially of the souls of children; Kwannon the merciful, who “sits by the stream of time and listens to the prayers of the world.” That their images should be grotesque in our eyes is natural enough, compounded as they are of a strange mixture of Indian and Far Eastern art, and in fashion not purely human but with an attempt to represent abstract qualities: Kwannon, for instance, the Divine Mercy, portrayed as

a woman, often with a great number of hands to signify her willingness to help suffering humanity.

Hence, naturally, there was some difficulty at the first introduction of Buddhism to Japan about the supersession by these conceptions, practically gods, of the ancient Kami of the land, whose worship was rooted so deeply in the nation's heart. But the theory of repeated incarnations or manifestations of the Buddhas came to the rescue. The Shinto gods were discovered to be but avatars—manifestations—of the Buddhas, some of whom even appeared to their worshippers and informed them of this fact, so that for the future all went well. The two religions, though retaining their individuality, went hand in hand; Shinto, though never lost, was merged in Buddhism. The Shinto temples changed their outward aspect; they retained their torii, their mirrors and gohei, but they added to them the gorgeous externals of Buddhism, and abandoning, in most cases, their plain uncoloured style with its straight lines and thatched roofs, they took to gold and colour and carving and sweeping roofs of tiles. This was the style called "Ryobu Shinto," that is, Shinto plus Buddhism. You can tell its temples anywhere. The presence of the torii shows you before you go in that such a building is not Buddhist, but the graceful curves, and perhaps the brilliant colouring and decoration of that torii shows you no less clearly that it is not purely Shinto. Nowadays, of course, such temples are pure Shinto as to their ritual and furniture, but their outward ornaments and their architecture perforce remain. The great temple at Nikko—the mausoleum of Ieyasu, a devout Buddhist deified by Shinto—is the most striking example of this style.

Of course the cause of the easy victory of Buddhism is not far to seek. Its non-militant character saved it from arousing any bitter opposition on the one hand, and on the other its gorgeous ritual, its lofty ethical system, its appeal to the emotions, must have been welcome enough to souls nourished hitherto on the dry husks of Shinto. At the same time the dreamy philosophy of the Indian faith, the rather dreary hope which was to crown its

effort, and above all the long vista of toil set before the believer ere even that salvation might be won, was a thing alien to the practical Far Eastern mind, especially to the highly unmetaphysical mind of Japan. Consequently one is not much surprised to learn that the process of development went briskly on, and that finally in Japan itself certain wholly native sects were formed whose views should better suit the genius of the nation. It seems that, in view of the enormous mass of the Buddhist sacred writings, any number of sects might be founded without going outside them, for so great is their bulk that no human being could ever master their whole contents. Hence the believer who is not entirely satisfied with any ready-made principles is free to improve upon them without peril to his orthodoxy, for the scriptures are the criterion, and so long as he does not travel outside their very extensive limits he is above reproach.

The tendency of the Far Eastern sects has accordingly, it appears, been to bring the goal of eternal hope ever nearer to the individual soul; in other words, to find a short cut to Nirvana, and to make Nirvana itself rather more interesting by substituting for its negative peace something more like positive happiness. Already in China certain sects had arisen whose teaching shows a tendency like this, namely, the "Tendai," "Shingon," and "Jodo" sects, all of which came to Japan and flourished there exceedingly. The Tendai sect, which came to Japan in the ninth century and became the parent of many others, made from one of the sutras the discovery that Buddhahood may be attained at once by him who shall rise to the knowledge of that Supreme Buddha of Original Existence, of whom Shaka himself was but a manifestation. The Shingon sect is associated with the romantic story of its Japanese apostle, Kobo Daishi, a wonder-worker whose performances, especially in the way of penmanship, still confront one in the most unexpected places in this country. Of this sect the doctrine was, it would seem, not a little complicated, but it too tended to shorten the period of probation. Under

this system a man may by self-culture attain to such heights of virtue that he may become a Buddha and pass into Nirvana while still in the flesh. He can, moreover, strive for the salvation of others, whereas on the original view only his own deliverance can be the concern of the individual. Lastly, in the twelfth century, came the Jodo sect—the sect of the Pure Land of Amida. Here was a complete reversal of the teachings of Buddhism as hitherto understood, inasmuch as this sect taught the doctrine of justification by faith, whereas the doctrine of



A BUDDHIST CEMETERY.

Buddha himself and all his successors up to this time was that salvation is to be attained solely by the efforts of the individual, and in no wise by faith in another or by any external help. But the Jodo doctrine was that it was to be attained by faith, by giving up the hopelessly hard task of self-enlightenment and trusting solely to the mercy of Amida the Deliverer. Of Amida, though his name was known as a Buddha, not so much had hitherto been heard; he comes prominently forward first in the teaching of this sect, whose followers were taught that

could they after death but attain to birth in the "Pure Land of Amida," they were sure of Buddhahood.

Who, then, was Amida? It seems that this originally abstract conception of Divine Light was thought of after a time as personified under the name of Amitabha (in Japanese, Amida), a Buddha; one of the abstract Buddhas, as it were, anterior to Shaka by immeasurable ages. This being, originally "a Buddha without beginning," took human nature on himself innumerable ages ago that he might save mankind. In that period, infinitely remote, he became something corresponding to a monk of the Buddhist world, and after a series of holy lives he came back in his human nature to the threshold of Buddhahood. There he stopped, and refusing to enter on the great reward, he bound himself by a mighty vow that he would not enter on Nirvana till he had attained salvation for the human race; that is, that it should so be that all who should call on his name in faith should pass to his Pure Land and so to full salvation.

The great way to attain to this Pure Land was to go on ceaselessly repeating the sacred invocation—in Japanese, "Namu Amida Butsu." The oftener this formula is repeated the greater the merit of the devotee, and certainly this sect is open to the reproach of a fondness for repetition (whether "vain" or not is not for me to say), for I am told that the greatest possible degree of merit is supposed to attach to the repetition of this invocation sixty thousand times a day, which performance is an ideal to be striven for by the pious believer.

The "Shin" or "Monto" or "Hongwanji" sect is a development of Jodo, but is of purely Japanese origin. Its founder, who was born about the close of the twelfth century, was one Shinran Shonin, a person of Imperial descent and a disciple of the founder of Jodo in Japan. Jodo taught belief in Amida plus good works; Shinran insisted on faith alone, not even accompanied by the endless repetition of the sacred invocation. Faith, and faith only, was all that was required, that faith being signified by invoking the name of Amida ten times. This sect differs also from the Jodo in teaching that

Amida comes to meet the soul of the believer not at death, but immediately on his acceptance of salvation through his name, and that the soul is saved then and there while the individual is still in this life. Nothing more is necessary; all is done once for all; all future good works and religious observances have no view to salvation, but are to be performed only in gratitude for Amida's mercy. Not that good works are despised: on the contrary, the Shin sect places a high standard of morals before its votaries, looking on this as inseparable from faith, though in no wise a means to the attainment of salvation.

You see, then, how far this sect, much the most flourishing and powerful in Japan, has travelled from the doctrine of Buddhism proper, teaching as it does the possibility of the attainment of salvation by anybody here and now; thus doing away practically with the whole system of karma and reincarnation, and introducing what amounts to a personal God in the Deliverer Amida. Indeed it is not easy to see how this sect can be said to be really Buddhist at all. It uses some of the sutras, and calls Amida, the object of its worship, by the name of Buddha, but otherwise it seems, on the face of it, at least, to have little enough in common with the religion of Sakyamuni; indeed, as a high authority remarks, it suggests rather a travesty of Christianity.

Together with so many other things, the Shin sect throws over the multiplicity of quasi-divine beings worshipped by the others; Shaka himself is made of small account, and the worship even of Kwannon is forbidden to the Shin believer, who may invoke none but Amida. To him even they may pray for none but spiritual blessings; things temporal are no subject for prayer, which is concerned only with the salvation of the soul. One strong point of the Shin sect, in view of the rapid advance of the country towards European civilisation, is the more flattering view which it takes of the spiritual position of the female sex, which it, unlike any other, allows to attain to Buddhahood without previous reincarnation in a masculine body. It is altogether the most

enlightened and progressive element in the Buddhism of Japan, and one cannot but think that if that faith is to retain any hold on this country it will be by means of this still powerful sect. One hears rather often that Buddhism, if not already dead, is at least moribund in this country of progress, but it seems to me that whatever may be the case with the other sects, the Shinshu is a standing contradiction to that statement. The older sects do certainly, in most cases, seem to have lost their hold not only of the educated classes, but also of the people; their temples stand neglected, half decaying, attended only on certain days, and that by the poorest classes and in the most perfunctory way. But the Shin and the Nichiren sects have clearly life enough in them yet—the Nichiren perhaps a little too much, as you would find out if you had the misfortune to stay near one of their temples. Such a banging on drums and gongs, such clapping of hands and loud-voiced repetition of a formula, has to be heard to be duly appreciated. But this sect (which, like the Shinshu, is of purely native origin), though it has a large and nothing if not enthusiastic following, whose bigotry and abusiveness towards those who differ from them would do honour, I believe, to the most ferocious of sectaries at home, can hardly count as a force to be reckoned with in the future of a country so progressive as Japan. Its flagrant superstitions, its reckless pantheism, which seems to take the form of indiscriminate idolatry, its charms and divinations, its exorcisms of foxes and other demons, its incantations and general fanaticism, seem to put it outside serious consideration. But it is otherwise with the Shin sect, wholly free as it is from anything of the sort and with a strong hold on a larger and far more important section of the community. The great Higashi Hongwanji temple here at Kyoto is an often-quoted case in point, but however often quoted the fact remains that this great and wonderful building, with all its magnificence of size and splendour of gold and of carving, was built in a few short years by the voluntary contributions of the people—the mighty timbers of its fabric drawn from the mountains

to their places by cables made of human hair, the offering of innumerable female devotees, who had sacrificed for this purpose the most cherished adornment of a Japanese woman. Moreover, the dignitaries and priests of this community still hold a high and respected position throughout the country; many of them are men of the highest education, versed in the science and even in the philosophy and theology of the West, some having even been educated in European universities.



PART OF BUDDHIST TEMPLE GARDEN PLANTED WITH ENGLISH FLOWER SEEDS IN HONOUR OF ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE.



OLD STONE BRIDGE AND LOTUS PLANTS.

CHAPTER V

KYOTO

AT last I have settled down for a while; this time in Kyoto, the sacred city of the Mikados, having come on a few days ago from Nagoya, a place I do not care for very much.

The busy, clattering station here gave one the idea on arriving that the city of the Mikados was going to turn out to be quite as much modernised as that of the Shoguns, but once clear of the station precincts one got back directly into Japanese life; everything had a charming old-world air, different even from the native parts of Tokyo. The only shock to my feelings was caused by an occasional meeting with an electric tram-car coming quickly along the sleepy canals through streets of old-world houses after a fashion brutally regardless of the fitness of things and of the gentle placidities one associates with the life of the old Court

city. Except this same mistaken tram, however, I saw little or nothing to suggest the West; foreign buildings and foreign clothes were alike conspicuous by their absence. One sees here long streets of low wooden houses, shops, and dwellings, vast walled enclosures of palace or temple parks, great trees overhanging the road and half hiding the grey roofs within, quaint wooden bridges across the half-dry river, but none of those hideous erections of brick and iron which so disfigure Tokyo. From my window on the hill called Maruyama there is a view such as is not to be found in many places, I think; right over the grey-brown city, with its trees and temples, to the blue hills beyond, in the foreground the roofs and pagodas of several ecclesiastical buildings half showing through the trees that clothe the hillside as it sinks down towards the town; black pines stretching out fantastic arms amidst the pale tints of spring and the masses of pink and white and scarlet bloom that cluster round the grey temple roofs—the whole so beautiful that even the incessant thumping of a holy gong at some concealed temple below seems less irritating than it might be elsewhere.

Since I have been in Kyoto I have devoted most of my time to shopping, or at least to looking at shops and factories—an amusing change from my recent country life. Of course there are endless temples and things of historic interest here which I am very keen to see, but I think I will keep them for a while and look at the shops, which are quite things by themselves. One might easily spend a fortune here on all kinds of magnificent things, but luckily one can also see them without buying them, on the strength of making very modest purchases indeed. I went yesterday with an American acquaintance to a certain well-known shop where she meant to buy a lot of expensive things. She had a Japanese guide, like most other tourists, but thought it would be rather “cute” to leave him behind on this occasion and do her talking if necessary through me, so as to save the “squeezes” which she rightly or wrongly attributed to his presence on other occasions. However, that was

no affair of mine, and we had considerable fun from the shopping. No shop front at all, either in European or in Japanese style; we went into what seemed like a private house, and an affable person requested us to keep our shoes on and to come into a miniature garden of the usual type behind. There we sat and were regaled with tea, no mention of business being made on either side for some time after we had finished tea and answered all the questions our entertainer put to us (in English). Finally we were shown upstairs into some rooms where no end of loveliness was displayed to our admiring eyes, exquisite embroideries for the most part, mounted and unmounted, and which did not seem to me dear for their quality, which was of the best. My friend bought with Transatlantic disregard for expense, and I looked on, consoling myself with the reflection that after all purchases mean a deal of extra luggage and things to look after. That took a whole morning, and other mornings since have been like unto it, when I have done a little modest shopping on my own account, all in the same sort of way. I take it these grand establishments are mostly for the benefit of foreigners. There are the usual endless streets of the ordinary sort of native shop all over the town of course, but they don't sell cloisonné and gorgeous embroideries and silks and fine porcelain; they have the usual dear little trumpery native things that I think so attractive, and there I keep buying honourable but quite useless things with reckless prodigality at five sen apiece.

Then I went the other day to a cloisonné factory, not to buy on any very large scale, for cloisonné buying is by no means a cheap form of amusement, but chiefly to see the process of making it. The factory was to all appearance a private house just like the rest, and the hands, not very many in number, were working away quite comfortably in the upstairs rooms. No hurry, no crowding, no machinery. I called them hands, but that is no word for these delicate artists; it came only by association after the ugly word "factory," which

seems always to be applied with brutal inappropriateness to this dainty workshop. I suppose you have read of the process, so I need not describe it; how the metal vase, or whatever it is, comes gradually to look like the finest porcelain, the design which ornaments it lightly outlined in gold as though drawn with the brush; the metal outline being really the divisions round which the pattern is, as it were, built up. We saw all stages, from the plain metal with the delicate tracery of copper wire soldered on with extraordinary accuracy and minuteness, then the filling in of the successive coatings of coloured enamel ready for heating, till at last the colour reaches the level of the wires which show only as delicate golden outlines; then comes the last polishing, and the thing is done. Each worker seemed to be quite independent, and to be working, as it were, on his own account, as he sat squatting happily on the floor with his delicate instruments by him, no table before him, but simply holding the vase in one hand and working on it with the other. It was an extraordinary contrast with the methods of a modern European workshop, no dirt or hubbub, nothing mechanical about it in all seeming. So, one would think, worked our artists in the Middle Ages while work was yet done for the work's sake. Yet they say that even in Japan the mechanical spirit of modern times is creeping in. Certainly one can see, even without training, the woful difference between the old and the new work in lacquer—at least in the lacquer that is most often seen. Cloisonné enamelling is one of the most admired industries of Japan nowadays, but it is not an ancient national art like lacquer work; it is believed to have come from China not much more than three centuries ago. It seems to have changed its character somewhat as time has gone on; the older pieces which have been shown to me were far less smooth and brilliant than the modern work with which one is so familiar. No doubt cloisonné is very wonderful and beautiful, but somehow I personally do not feel the same enthusiasm about the most exquisite piece of cloisonné that I do about old lacquer. Old gold lacquer!

Can anything in the world be so exquisite in its delicacy and refinement? Of course the ordinary lacquer one sees now is not really good, but coarse and quickly made, and not done with gold at all, but with some baser metal. Still I am told that the art is not lost, and that work of the finest kind is still produced, but certainly one does not see much of it about.

There is one thing I do not like about some of the Kyoto things, charming as most of them are, and that is the way they have of using reproductions of photographs for decorative purposes. There is an excessively pretty kind of fabric much made here—velvet, in which some of the loops are cut and some are not, in such a way as to produce the effect of a picture painted on the velvet, though the design is really woven in it. Well, most of these same pieces of cut velvet—it is mostly sold in squares and panels, not, so far as I have seen, by the piece—are decorated with regular landscapes, obviously taken from coloured photographs. Now nobody admires Japanese coloured photographs more than I do, but I cannot see that it is not perverting art and upsetting all the fitness of things to copy them minutely and accurately in velvet and then make that into sofa cushions or something of that sort. I saw one the other day with a realistic picture of that famous view of Fuji where the mountain is seen upside down in the water as well, an unapproachably lovely scene in Nature, of course, and one that comes out very prettily in a photograph. But, in the first place, is it a comfortable idea to lean one's back against a volcano and a river? and secondly, what sort of art is it to reproduce a photographed landscape as a design for a textile fabric? Would the taste of Old Japan have sanctioned such a thing? Elaborately minute representations, for instance, of the Nikko or the Nara temples or the Red Bridge at Nikko, or some other famous scene done in velvet with the inflexibly prosaic and indiscriminating accuracy of a photograph. That, I suppose, is what foreigners like, and so it goes on being made. But what is become of the old Japanese sense of the beautiful? What of

the old masters of the decorative art who adorned the things of beauty we have seen with all manner of exquisite suggestions but never a reproduction? Would any one of them have ever thought of making an exact copy of any scene or building, however lovely, even at first hand, still less of mechanically copying a photograph of it? You may see faint fleeting suggestions of beautiful landscapes or famous places, or part of them, hopelessly mixed up with the clouds of heaven and palpably belonging to the airy realms of fancy, losing themselves in an indefiniteness delicately definite, half hinted, half indicated, floating out of nowhere into nothing, but did you ever see anything reproduced as you now get, for instance, that same bridge in red and solid completeness, with even the telegraph poles of Meiji thrown in for the same money? If photography had existed in the days of the great art schools of the past, would all the screens and fusuma we have admired in temple or palace, lovely in their delicately restrained suggestion, their effect depending not on detail but on beauty of line—would they all have been covered with realistic views of some other place? Instead of a single blossoming cherry branch, say, full of life and vividness, yet wholly lacking elaborate detail or connection with anything else, would you have had a panel decorated with a complete picture of Ueno Park in spring, with a rickshaw in the foreground and a tea-stall behind? I trow not. I suppose it is the contact with Europe which is doing all this, and yet, after all, European art is not all hideous and vulgar and commonplace any more than all European manners are necessarily bearish and rude.

Then I have not only been looking at the shops by day but at the streets by night; here even more charming than in Tokyo, on account of the far greater proportion of paper lanterns. The thoroughfares in the centre of the town are highly lively and nothing if not amusing. One in particular—Theatre Street we call it, though it has a Japanese name—is a great delight. Every single building in this street is a theatre or other place of amusement—I should imagine some correspond rather

to our music-halls—and each has a grand poster outside, portraying the heroism and horrors of the piece within, in which the characters in wonderful old costumes and with wonderful long features make astonishing faces as they commit respectively murder or harakiri. There are all sorts of theatres, good, bad, and indifferent. In one I assisted at a grand historical tragedy of the dignified type, and evidently very “high toned,” though I never found out exactly what it was about beyond the fact that it involved a deal of blood and dark intrigue. This afternoon I went from curiosity into a small one where something was evidently going on. I paid with reckless prodigality four sen five rin for my ticket (about a penny farthing, I should think), and squatted down at the back to watch the proceedings. The scenery consisted of some pieces of coloured calico, artfully disposed upon a clothes horse, and three actors were seated on the floor talking about something very funny in front of it. They wore the striped cotton kimono and apron of everyday life, but their hair was dressed in the old-fashioned queue by means of artful wigs of shining pasteboard painted black where the hair was supposed to be, and blue where it was shaven—all of course with lifelike effect. The inevitable chair was brought to me after a few minutes, and I had to sit on it for a little while to show my gratitude for the attention. But it is rather trying to be raised to that bad eminence, when you are the only foreigner in the house; moreover, I found the wit of the piece dull, as I could understand none of the jokes beyond the exquisite one of poking the other characters in the ribs, so I presently took a deferential leave of the proceedings.

Then there are tumbling and conjuring performances, just like those at Asakusa and Tokyo—side shows and shooting galleries where you shoot with a bow and arrows, and all manner of childlike delights of the same kind. I went to a story-teller's place last night, to see what went on, not in any hope of being thrilled by the story. The Japanese like to get their novel-reading done in this way to a great extent. (I should not wonder at this if

the Chinese character were the reason, but I am told it is not.) The story-teller was dressed in black haori and blue silk hakama, gorgeous to behold, and sat by himself on a kind of rostrum between two of the charming lighting arrangements which are called andons here; quite the prettiest possible means of making darkness visible, but I always think rather inadequate as reading-lamps. However, the Japanese evidently do not think so, for they use them constantly for the purpose. Anyway, there he sat, and after some preliminary business he began, just as a lady pianist at a concert makes a great ado with her gloves and things before she can begin playing. He went on for some time talking away with great energy, with the usual breathless effect that Japanese always has when one is not understanding a word of what is said, emphasising his points with a fan, and making occasional faces. Suddenly he stopped—obviously at a point of breathless interest—and sent round the hat; I suppose a sort of Far Eastern equivalent of “To be continued in our next,” where the heroine is left with the knife of the assassin at her throat till the hero comes to her rescue next week. After that he went on again as though nothing had happened, everybody continuing to listen breathlessly. I stayed quite a long time, interested by the scene though deaf to the intricacies of the tale. The hat was sent round again before I left, and I have no idea when the performance came to an end.

Yesterday afternoon R—— and I spent with the wrestlers; a most laughable entertainment to the unscientific. Of course you have heard a lot about Japanese wrestling—everybody has, though everybody is not aware that there are two sorts, this professional kind and the gentlemanly art of “jūjitsu” which is quite different. These wrestlers you must know are a class apart, and quite unlike other Japanese, who, as you must be tired of hearing, are all very small and mostly thin. These men, on the contrary, are all tall and as fat as prize pigs. As a rule their faces are not beautiful—though

whether that differentiates them very clearly from the mass of their countrymen is not for me to say. They wear their hair in the old-world queue, however, which is certainly more becoming than the fashionable style, though they do not shave the front of the head. You can always tell a wrestler if you see one, by his inches and his fat and his queue. These people are all members of a close corporation, and of families which have been in the wrestling business for generations. Certainly it would not be easy for the average Japanese to develop the correct physique at a moment's notice. These people go about from town to town exhibiting their skill in each for some days at a time, and at present a troupe is here. The scene of operations is the dry bed of the Kamogawa, into which we descended by steps from a bridge. A large space had been railed off by rough wooden barriers, round which rose not benches exactly, but platforms on different levels for the spectators to squat on. In the midst was the wrestling tent—a large circular roof supported by poles and draped with violet hangings which were looped up all round. Before we could take our places we had a tremendous altercation as to what we were to pay; for as we were foreigners it had struck those at the receipt of custom that it would be a good idea to make us pay as many dollars for our seats as the crowded native audience had paid cents for theirs. The worm turned, and though the turning process took quite half an hour, we finally came with great goodwill on both sides to an arrangement by which we were to pay one-tenth of what had at first been asked, but still probably about ten times as much as we ought to have paid. However, we got chairs for it, and a good deal of amusement as well. The wrestlers sat just outside the ring till their turn came on and talked with condescending affability to the surrounding amateurs. The ring was a very tiny one; I understood nothing of the science of the performance, but I believe the great thing is not to be pushed out of the ring. But I wish you could have seen the doughty warriors getting ready for a bout. They were, as I have already told you, as fat as whales, and were

attired in the neat simplicity of a dark blue waistband about six inches wide and adorned with a deep fringe. There seemed to my ignorant eyes to be vastly little wrestling, but a quite inordinate amount of preparation for what there was. Before each bout, which might last perhaps one minute, five minutes or more were consumed in preliminary contortions; standing on one foot and stretching the other fat leg into the air, slapping the limbs with resounding noise, drinking water out of a bucket and spitting it out again seemed to be the great essentials. After about five minutes of these graceful exercises the champions would crouch down in a sitting position as though they meant to do something; but not a bit; they would be up again directly, slapping and stretching and drinking water as before. This often went on four or five times before they got to business, and even when they did the result did not seem to inexperienced eyes quite worthy of so much preparation; they did not seem to do very much, and the whole thing was always over in an incredibly short time, during which the excitement of the native spectators appeared to be intense. Four fat old men—ex-wrestlers, we were told—sat on the ground, one at the foot of each of the posts which supported the roof, and I underwent quite a lot of unnecessary anxiety on their behalf, as the combatants staggered nearer and nearer to them till it seemed as though nothing could save them from being flattened beneath the falling mass. There was also an umpire always in the ring with the champions, following them round and round, eyeing every movement like a cat with a mouse, and apparently controlling the combat with a wooden fan he held in his hand. There were two of these individuals; Japanese of the ordinary size dressed in silk hakama and the picturesque winged upper garment of bygone days; and very nice indeed they looked, in striking contrast with the audience, most of whom had adorned themselves with the most execrable of bowler hats. I am told that the profession of wrestling umpire is the monopoly of one family, and that every one who wishes to become one must enter that

family by adoption. After the last round there was a laughable scene in which all the champions came into the ring together, elegantly attired in gorgeous silk and velvet aprons tied round the waist with what looked to me like the straw rope of Shinto association, from which hung unmistakable "gohei," though what Shinto and wrestling have to do with each other we did not find out. But the effect of the costume as the heroes revolved was too funny for words. Some announcement was hoisted on a board, and the performance then ended for the day.

What is called "jijitsu" is quite a different sort of thing from this; it is an elegant and knightly accomplishment, once much affected by the samurai. I was once present at a private exhibition of this art, and it astonished me beyond measure. It seems to be a system by which, with a little knowledge of anatomy and certain tricks, a weak man can throw a strong one over his head, and by neatly breaking a bone here and there, or employing other arguments of the same kind, reduce him to abject helplessness in a moment without apparently exerting himself to any great extent. In the old days this was a samurai accomplishment, and I understand that the police, who are supposed to belong to that class, are still expected to learn it.

For the last week I have been having a "lovely time" among the temples and their treasures of art. I shall not describe them to you, because if you are coming out here you will see them for yourself. But I am glad I did not see Kyoto till I had acquired some knowledge of the past of the country, and some faint power of discriminating between the various schools of art. Otherwise all these things which I have found so living and so full of intelligible interest and beauty would have left but a confused impression, and probably not a very appreciative one. If you are shown a kakemono or screen by some famous artist representing some celebrated episode in history or some divine personage, you are more likely both to appreciate and to remember if you have heard of artist or hero or saint before. They are friends to you,

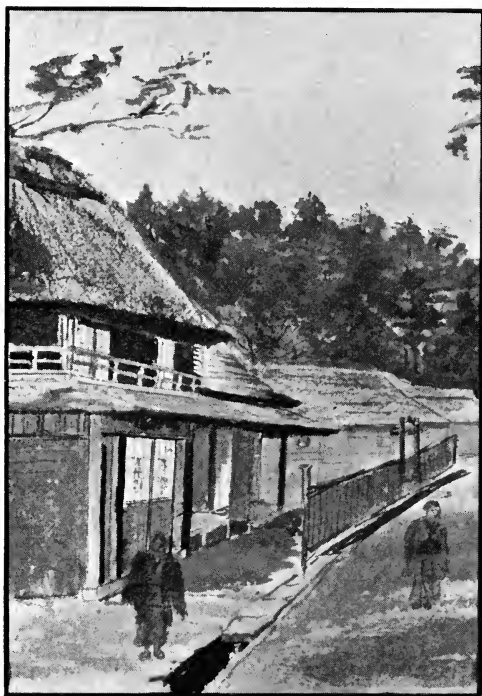
and not merely extraordinary names that you cannot pronounce, as they are to the newly arrived globe-trotter; he cannot revel in these things as one can who has made friends with them in ever so slight a degree. Then again the delight of the long kuruma drives through the delicious air and the exquisite scenes which meet one at every turn. Kyoto itself is fascination; its suburbs, or rather the country places which were once its suburbs, are fairyland. I always make a day of these expeditions, taking a kurumaya, with whom I have made a great acquaintance, and who has the briefly descriptive name of Taro. Taro is the happiest and best-tempered biped you can imagine; nothing comes amiss to him whatsoever. I do not hurry him; he gets plenty of time for his mid-day meal, and extensive rests for tea and smoke while I am in temples. He seems to think I have quite an inordinate fondness for temples (but then he did not know me in my shopping days).

So he and I go the leisurely round of these sacred edifices and take our "bento," otherwise lunch, with us, and get the inevitable tea to wash it down at some tea-shed on the way. These excursions are my delight; the country looks so charming in its ring of hills—Kyoto is so much smaller than it used to be that one has to go quite into the country to see places once suburban—and the pictures one finds as one goes are delicious: here a group of houses, there a solemn temple grove, and everywhere peace and stillness and freshness. To go to one temple one generally passes half a dozen others, each in surroundings more charming than the last, or at least so one fancies under the spell of the individual charm of each. Some are enclosed by long walls sloping inwards and covered with a curious decoration of horizontal stripes, which shows that they were once the retreat of abdicated Majesty, or at least the abode of some scion of the Imperial house who had forsaken the world for the religious life. The temples of the Hongwanji sect also, though they may not individually boast of having had such an inmate, are nevertheless all allowed a wall of this kind because the founder of the sect was a personage of



A TEMPLE GATEWAY.

Imperial blood. One cannot but be struck, in going to see such places, by the extraordinary frequency with which princes and nobles in mediæval days betook themselves to the religious life. The practice was common enough, no doubt, in Europe at the same period, but it can scarcely have prevailed there to quite the same extent as it seems to have done here. Many of these



A WAYSIDE TEA-HOUSE.

exalted personages seem to have shaved their heads and actually taken vows; but even without doing that, to go and end one's days in a monastery seems to have been the rule rather than the exception. Hence the gorgeously, or rather beautifully, decorated suites of apartments one finds in so many Kyoto temples; great persons, from Mikados downwards, having gone there to live in an

atmosphere more holy, doubtless, but also considerably freer, than that of the court, and to die in the odour of sanctity surrounded by the glories of art. For it does not seem to have been necessary to exchange the purple for the straw by any means; the princely devotee lived in probably quite as much comfort and splendour as he had enjoyed before. For, after all, simplicity was the keynote of Kyoto court life in those days; even the reigning Mikados, to judge by the still existing palace, had no great amount of what we should regard as magnificence in their surroundings. Severe plainness is everywhere the distinguishing mark of these sacred apartments, except in the matter of mural decoration. In that line evidently they indulged themselves more freely; many of these things are works of the choicest art, but still they are delicate and subdued in tone—ascetic rather than dazzling or gorgeous in effect. Some decorations in Kyoto are gorgeous enough, no doubt, but these are associated with the memory of Shoguns rather than of Mikados. For it was not till the rise of the Tokugawa family that Yedo became the Shogun's city; between the fall of Kamakura and the rise of Ieyasu they, like the Emperors, had their abode in Kyoto, where most of them lived lives no less ineffectual than theirs.

Though Kyoto was thus the capital of both Mikado and Shogun, its history during the Middle Ages is by no means so eventful as you might suppose; for, in spite of the presence of these august personages, it was not exactly the seat of government, for the reason that there was no government of which it could be the seat. The Mikados continued what they had always been; the sceptre slipped from the Shoguns, and each baron did that which was right in his own eyes, and governed, or misgoverned, his own country as he chose, and made it as large as he could at the expense of his neighbours. Fire and sword and civil war were part of the established order of things throughout the length and breadth of the land, while Kyoto and its rulers stood serenely aloof in sacred seclusion, devoting their elegant leisure to the cultivation of etiquette and the fine arts, alternating

devotion with dissipation after a fashion not unknown in Europe at the same period.

After the fall of Kamakura in 1333, the torch of civil war was not quenched for many a day, for the favouritism of the restored Mikado and the resulting jealousies had lighted it again. There were plots and counter-plots, and for the next sixty years the unhappy country was deluged with blood. At last, however, under Yoshimitsu, third Shogun of the Ashikaga line, the breach was healed by the retirement of the representative of one of the rival Imperial dynasties. Yoshimitsu was a capable ruler, and under him the country got some respite from its troubles and the Imperial city recovered some of its prestige. He was not only a great statesman, but a great patron of art and literature, and, needless to say, of tea-drinking. Like many other Japanese rulers, he withdrew nominally in favour of his son, and from his luxurious retirement continued to direct events no less than before, though he had more time to devote to the pursuits of elegant leisure, to piety, to banqueting, the lyric drama, and the teacup. It was during this period that he built the present temple of Kingakuji, with its pavilion whose walls and roof and floor were all coated with gold. Little trace of all that golden splendour now remains at Kingakuji, no longer a palace, but ever since his death a Buddhist monastery. Yet the place is lovely still, though shorn of its former radiance, and the once golden pavilion still remains set in the midst of the temple grounds among pines and bamboos and miniature streams, where the cherry and maple spread their flaming tints in spring and autumn, and all the year there broods an air of ancient peace.

After the death of Yoshimitsu the sceptre passed to weaker hands; one incapable and extravagant Shogun succeeded another, and the country fell back into its former state of misery and anarchy. The best-known name among these Shoguns is that of Yoshimasa, the eighth of the Ashikaga line, who, in the midst of all the bloodshed and desolation of the period, lived a life of extravagant luxury, and devoted the proceeds of his exactions to a liberal patronage of the fine arts and the

accumulation of objects of vertu. To him is believed to belong the glory of bringing the tea-ceremonies to a high state of development and perfection, and he practised them in his palace, now the monastery of Gingakuji, where he had a pavilion covered with silver, or intended to be so covered, in imitation of Yoshimitsu's golden house. So severely refined are the decorations of his tea-room that I defy any one by looking at them to tell what they may be supposed to represent. But the garden, as usual, is charming. After his death things went from bad to worse: each succeeding Shogun practised the tea-ceremonies, none practised righteousness. Effeminate self-indulgence was the rule in Kyoto, and all over the country there was no law but the will of the stronger.

At last, in the darkest days of these times of anarchy, one of the contending barons began to get his head above his fellows. This was one Oda Nobunaga, who, by getting nearly all power into his own hands, established something like a central government, and better times began for the Imperial city under his regime. The Shogun was a mere figurehead, and finally Nobunaga deposed him, though he himself, not belonging to the Minamoto clan, could not take the title of Shogun, which fell for a time into abeyance.

Nobunaga's death made room for a greater than himself—the famous Hideyoshi, generally known in Japan as the “Taiko.” He had been one of Nobunaga's generals, having risen to that position from a very humble one by sheer force of talent. On his master's death he at once took up the reins of government and rapidly reduced the country to order, himself at last holding a position inferior only to that of the Emperor, though he too never bore the title of Shogun, not being of Minamoto descent. Under him Kyoto regained all its former splendour, and he made it his place of abode, building for himself a palace of unparalleled magnificence at Fushimi, close by. With his death his power passed to Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the next dynasty of Shoguns, and the sacred capital ceased to be the seat of government, though the Mikados were to remain there

for nearly three centuries longer while Ieyasu and his descendants ruled the land from the once insignificant fishing village of Yedo. From that day to this Kyoto has remained, I suppose, much the same—calm in its dignity, its splendours slowly fading, but its beauty and leisured charm remaining to this day, when even cloistered Majesty no longer dwells within it.

Yet through all the chances and changes of the troublous centuries before the rise of the Taiko and the Tokugawa, the life that one thinks of as Kyoto life had



FEUDAL CASTLE WALL.

gone quietly on, as it was destined to do for centuries after—aloof from politics, and powerless to influence them, affected also very little by them except in so far as the Imperial establishment might be on more or less short commons, according to the loyalty or otherwise of those who held the power and with it the purse. Poverty and celestial Majesty seem, indeed, to have been by no means unacquainted with one another, and one wonders sometimes how much of the severe simplicity of the Imperial surroundings may have been due to tra-

dition and how much to necessity. As for the kuges—the old court nobles—they seem to have been poor in the most literal sense, many of them, it is said, gaining a scanty living by humble trades pursued in the aristocratic seclusion of their own abodes, which encircled that of the Mikado. Consequently, amusements and pursuits which involved great expenditure could hardly be indulged in by these high personages, and hence, too, I suppose, the more aristocratic such things were, the more they were simple and inexpensive. Just look for a moment at what the court gaieties were. Hunting parties, with costly horses and accoutrements, tilting and tournaments, lavish entertainments, gorgeous progresses with crowds of magnificent retainers—such things were for the Shogun and his daimyos, whose wealth was gained and preserved by the power of the sword, but were not very characteristic of the Emperor's subdued court. Here awe and sanctity took the place of outward magnificence. Nobody seems to have gone about much, certainly not with vast retinues of horsemen; and on the rare occasions when the Son of Heaven made a progress to, perhaps, some temple or suburban retreat close by, he did so in some such staid bullock-waggon as one may see in the museum in Tokyo to this day—a cumbrous vehicle of black lacquer with ornaments of daintily-chased gold laid on with no lavish hand. Court life seems on the whole to have been an indoor thing for everybody, for when Majesty was always indoors why should other people want to run about, provided their rank was but high enough to permit them to bask in the rays of that stationary sun? So, as amusement was the only business of life, these ethereal ladies and ladylike gentlemen seem to have taken it very solemnly. Social functions were much in vogue, but they cannot have been extremely lively. The most delirious of them seems to have been the “cha no yu,” or ceremonial tea-party.

The origin of these “tea ceremonies” goes back to ancient times. Tea itself, like Buddhism, came from China, and it and the ceremonies connected with it were at first, we are told, associated with religion, as useful in

keeping the devout awake during their pious exercises. In fact, the plant itself was a special gift from Heaven, which sprang of old from the eyelids of the contemplative saint Dharma after he had cut them off because they persisted in closing in sleep. The very name of the "tea ceremonies" seems to suggest old Kyoto—Myako—and all its elegant uselessness, but they were not in fact in any way confined to it. No one with any pretensions to taste or refinement in any part of the country but was a votary of the art or science of tea-drinking and practised its attendant ritual; the greatest generals and statesmen were not exempt from the giddy contagion; the Taiko Hideyoshi himself was a furious tea-drinker, and did all he could to lead others in the same paths. Tea-drinking was almost as serious a thing as war and statecraft; in fact, it may have been with Hideyoshi a form of the latter, for it is said that he cultivated a taste for ceremonial tea among his soldiery in order to keep them happy and contented during those unfortunate interludes when there was no slaughtering for them to do; the sword was exchanged not for the ploughshare, but for the tea-kettle. As for what the ceremonies themselves were, as they have been described by various learned authorities, it will be enough for me to tell you that severe simplicity was the correct "note" of such entertainments in their most highly developed form. But if the adjuncts were thus simple (often, be it observed, with a very costly simplicity), the ceremonies themselves were not—are not, indeed, for the solemn tea-party still endures to some extent, a measure of the difference between the notions of amusement existing respectively in the Far Eastern and the Western minds. "Without purity, peace, reverence, and detachment from worldly cares," we are told that the great "tea reformer" of Hideyoshi's day, Senno Rikyu, said there could be no proper tea-party. Just imagine such an entertainment: the guests arriving in this frame of mind and each taking his place with the proper compliment and in the strictest order of precedence; the departure of the host from the room, leaving the guests to ceremonially examine and

remark upon the kakemono and the flower arrangement ; then the return of the host with his fire materials and the slow and awful ceremony of the boiling of the kettle and the making by the guests of appropriate remarks and compliments on the way he does it, after permission has been first obtained to gaze reverently on the process. Some time ago I was very kindly invited to assist at a modified form of a ceremony of this sort. It seemed to me to last for hours, and I by no means adorned it, for



A CEREMONIAL TEA.

though I had heard of the things one is expected to keep on saying and doing, it is quite another thing to act gracefully on the information acquired. The kettle had to be boiled, of course, and I thought it never would, in this present world at least. A watched pot, one knows, never boils, but it is nothing to a ceremonial kettle on two sticks of charcoal. Then the taste of the achieved result is abominable ; it is not what you would call tea at all, but a sort of horrible pea-green porridge rather like very thick green-pea soup. The horrid thing is made

frothy with a whisk, and you have to drink it as though it were the nectar of the gods, with lengthened sweetness long drawn out, only it is exceedingly bitter, for the tea is green in addition to being as thick as gruel. Everybody enjoyed the party I am speaking of very much; I did so myself because of the interest of it, but I believe the rest of us enjoyed the tea too. On the whole I think a little of the "cha no yu" style of afternoon tea goes a long way; our brief and brutal fashion seems better proportioned to the span of human life.

But old Kyoto life was not all tea-drinking, of course; there were other forms of excitement—burning incense, for instance—almost as serious as tea-drinking, but rather nicer I should think, for incense has a pleasant smell, whereas ceremonial tea has a horrible taste. I believe incense-parties are still given, but I have never been present at one so far. I understand the idea is to burn a great many kinds one after the other and get the guests to identify the different varieties used. How any one can preserve any power of discrimination after sniffing at several kinds in succession—all, I suppose, more or less alike—I cannot imagine. Certain disagreeable experiences of my own have led me to the conviction that the Japanese have absolutely no noses at all; but it may be that by the grace of Kwannon the Merciful they can smell all sweet and charming things such as incense and flowers and remain insensible to—well—those things to which they are insensible.

Then there were certain gentle and indoor games to be played; there were the Nô dramas to be seen and the moon to be gazed at. The gazing at the moon was nearly as important as the tea ceremonies, and seems to have been practised by everybody, and the most ferocious spirits of these troublous times seem to have done their duty by the moon no less than the court ladies. All cultivated persons made a point of appreciating the moon; if you had any respect for yourself you were careful about this. Then of course the moon can not only be gazed upon, but also written about, and poetising in the days of Miyako was one of the serious occupations

of every-day life. (Indeed, it is so still, it would appear, to some extent.) No grand epics or things of that sort by professional poets, or even official effusions by poets-laureate, but the making of neat little verses by amateurs as a polite accomplishment—verses of thirty-one syllables, I believe, expressing no particular sentiment, but only a little picture; a verbal snap-shot of some momentary phase of nature or life, with maybe a word or two to suggest some feeling by association. At first these things—I mean translations of them—seemed to me quite blankly unmeaning, but by degrees one gets to see there is something in them, and the more one reads of them the better one likes them. At any rate they can by no means be said to belong to the dreary region of the obvious. But as to writing them, I suppose the capacity to do so is hereditary; every man, woman, and child in Japan seems ready to produce a verse on the smallest provocation, and to do so, moreover, within the narrow limits prescribed by the rules of the art. Not only the moon seems to inspire them, but anything else you like—that is, anything in their line—and they can write verses on the spur of the moment on any theme selected. There is no false modesty either about showing these productions or reading them to one's friends. There are places both here and about Tokyo, like Arashiyama or Mukojima, where people go to see the cherry blossoms. They picnic there, and then write a stanza on the subject, though it seems a little hard to see what any of them can find to say on a somewhat limited subject which has been steadily written on for a dozen centuries of industrious poetising. Yet the ink on the composition is no sooner dry than it is read out to the admiring company, and then probably hung upon a tree for the delectation of the public at large. So it is not to be wondered at if, seeing how this still prevails in these utilitarian latter days of railways and telegrams, they were more in vogue still in the dreamy palaces of Miyako when the noise of the outer world fell but faintly on the ear, but the moon and the plum blossom, love and the loved one, loomed large before the eye. Indeed, literature, especially in the earlier

days of Kyoto, seems to have been a distinctly fashionable pursuit, particularly among the ladies, whose writings appear to be the most numerous and the most famous. One is glad to think they had some occupation besides tea ceremonies and dark intrigues wherein to pass their days. One can imagine the fair authoress of the famous "Genji's Dream" as she sat in a heap upon the mats, lost in an ocean of drapery, her innumerable garments and scarlet hakama streaming into immensity behind her, while the growing wonder of the romance dragged its slow length along beneath her delicate hands. At least I believe on authority that it is both interminable and dull, but I observe the Japanese speak of it as we might of the Odyssey.



ANCIENT COSTUMES.

CHAPTER VI

NIKKO

AT last I am in Nikko, and I am glad of it for two reasons: first, it is a charming place, and secondly, it is very inconvenient not to have seen Nikko, for it is a matter of proverbial knowledge that till you have done so you must not say “kekko.” Now “kekko” means “beautiful,” “splendid,” “charming”—anything, in short, that is enthusiastic—and as there are not a few things in Japan which irresistibly suggest the use of such an adjective, I decided at last to go and acquire the right to use this indispensable word by seeing Nikko.

Utsunomiya is the place where the railways north and south join the little branch line which goes thence to Nikko. But something far more beautiful than the railway goes thence to Nikko too—an avenue of cryptomerias more than twenty miles long, continuous on either side save for a few accidental breaks caused by fires. By this you may go to Nikko all the way from

Utsunomiya, or you may go, as I did, by the "Reiheishi Kaido," which joins the railway at a little town called Kanuma. This Reiheishi Kaido was at one time a highway of much dignity, for by it travelled the envoy who year by year came from Kyoto bearing the gifts with which the Mikado was wont to do honour to the shrines of Nikko. One story goes that its trees, now so magnificent in their stately age, were planted there when saplings as the humbler offering of those who could not give lanterns of stone or bronze to honour the mighty dead. I do not know what truth there may be in this, but at any rate "*se non è vero è ben trovato*," for surely no gift could be more worthy of a glorious memory than these long avenues leading on across the plain for mile after mile, till at last they climb the sacred mountain itself and lay their age-long homage at the very temple gate.

The roadway between these trees is a fairly wide one; its surface, alas! in nowise to be commended, full as it is of ruts of amazing depth and joltiness, to say nothing of the muddiness which seems to be its chronic condition. On either side rises a sloping bank of green, covered with all kinds of vegetation—ferns and familiar-looking wild flowers such as one might see at home. Out of this bank rise the trees—huge cryptomerias shooting up straight as arrows to the sky, their long roots cutting the line of the bank and varying its green with their soft red. Up and up they tower with never a thought of a branch till they reach about a third of their whole height, perhaps some thirty or forty feet from the ground, tapering but little, and looking like the red granite columns of some vast cathedral isle of more than mortal building. When they do begin to branch they still go soaring on, the pinky red of their trunks showing almost purple under the deep transparent shadows cast by their veil of glowing green. Behind them smaller trees of various kinds stand at a little distance, then the farm lands at the back. All night it had been raining, and early in the morning too; but now the sun was shining brightly, and the air had a soft clearness and purity indescribable, through which flying clouds cast shadows of wonderful transparent blue

on the wide landscape round about; all the green things growing in the careful little fields on either side of the road were fresh and glistening, and the fragrance from the soft green tassels of the mighty trees was full of the suggestion of the spring.

No horses of course on this road, only the usual team of perspiring but lively fellow-creatures, and as the way is long and nearly all uphill, one has to have two of them to each rickshaw. On we went, pattering merrily through the mud, jolting and slipping and



ON THE REIHEISHI KAIDO.

sticking, but perfectly happy and apparently with plenty of breath to spare for conversation as well as for the necessary grunting in bad places. For in this country nobody can do anything involving any exertion without a great deal of semi-vocal grunting, and if the work is really hard, like loading a ship without a windlass, it is necessary even to chant.

For a long time we saw only green behind the tall madder columns, dark or light, sometimes a group of almost black pines, sometimes a flash of emerald bamboo

or early rice shoots, tiny fields of vegetables—market-garden plots I suppose. At last we came to a large village (Imaichi), where the two solemn approaches meet. It is all one long uphill stone street, the width of the avenue, and full of that sound which is of all others the most characteristic of Nikko, the sound of running water, here in no romantic cascade, yet very musical in its way as it tinkles in its stone channel down the village street, looking as bright and sparkling as though no dwellings were near to soil its purity. But spoiling things for the sake of spoiling them does not seem to be a Japanese trait, nor defiling them out of wantonness. What would a tiny stream running down the middle of an English—let me not venture to say a Scotch—village be like? Would not its offence cry to Heaven? But civilisation has not yet reached this pitch here in Japan. At Imaichi we stopped at a little tea-house to rest, delighting in the soft reposefulness of the place, and I regaled myself on cakes whose hues of violent green and magenta might suggest immediate dissolution to a newcomer. But I know by this time that they are nothing worse than rather fattening, and ate them with cheerful confidence, while the kuruma men indulged in a wild debauch of tea and rice whereon to finish the long uphill road. At last, after some miles, another village, larger, longer, steeper, ending abruptly in a wooded height above, and here as the houses began the great trees left off, to begin again in the solemn groves above. As we got among the houses night began to close around us, and the sky to grow dark and threatening. Everything ahead was quickly lost in the gathering gloom, made darker perhaps than it really was by the endless paper lanterns and occasional electric lights which suddenly appeared and seemed to climb the long street in front, ending abruptly, as it seemed, in utter darkness above. There is no river down the middle of this village, but in front of every door there is a mysterious gurgling arrangement in the shape of an iron reservoir full of bubbling water which rushes in again of itself whenever any is taken out, and the overflow from these keeps the street

between perpetually clean and dustless. At last the street ended suddenly, cut off by what sounded in the darkness like a raging torrent, with absolute blackness beyond. I knew quite well that there was more than one very good foreign hotel in this place, but decided for the present to have nothing to do with them but to go to native quarters instead, supported by the knowledge that if necessary one can always cater for oneself in the village.

When I awoke next morning the vanishing walls of my room showed a charming picture glittering under the morning sun with all the freshness brought by another night of rain. Far above, looking as though actually in the sky, hung high lawns of vivid green on the slopes of the mountain Nantaisan immediately overhead, fantastic wreaths of vapour rising from them to the few white clouds that still hung in the deep transparent sky; below, half touched with sunlight, half lost in the rising cloud streamers, lay the solemn temple groves, still dark for all the golden light, yet dashed here and there with touches of soft madder pink where the tree trunks caught the dancing sunbeams falling through the green. Outside the verandah was the garden of the house with its fresh greenery, its stone lantern and miniature rocks, and beyond a wide landscape of forest and hill, with the grey roofs of the village street sloping down through the dark trees to the river beneath.

When I went out later on, after the familiar excitements of the toilet and the subsequent shadowy breakfast, I discovered the reason of that sound of many waters which puzzled me last night. For at the end of the village street rushes the river Daiya down a steep decline through a narrow ravine whose precipitous sides are partly formed of ancient masonry, huge blocks of stone stained with age and green with the ferns and growing things that fill the crevices between them. Two bridges cross the ravine, only a few feet apart in material distance, yet half a world asunder for all that. One, a single arch of scarlet lacquered wood, spans the foaming torrent with an indescribable grace and light-

ness, its brilliant colour and dainty ornaments of shining metalwork standing out in bright relief against the dark greens of the surrounding woods, a bridge at once simple yet elaborate, sumptuous yet unobtrusive—a work of Old Japan; the other flat, grey, iron, hideous, looking as though it were copied from some abomination in Lancashire, constructed on Heaven knows what improved scientific principle for the exemplification of the modern trinity of utility, cheapness, and ugliness—a bridge, in short, of Meiji. Fortunately the Red Bridge is not only



THE SACRED BRIDGE.

beautiful but also sacred, so neither I nor any one else may profane it with our feet. Time was when only the Shogun and, on certain days, pilgrims might cross it, and nowadays, when the Shogun is a thing of the past and the pilgrim tends to merge more and more in the excursionist, the right belongs alone to the Emperor, and the lovely bridge is saved from the all-pervading tourist and his penknife by massive barriers at either end. Once across the iron bridge, I found myself at the foot of a broad stair of ancient stonework, ascending

through the cryptomeria grove, with a furious little cascade beside it rushing down to the road through a rather primitive-looking waterwork arrangement, and which, with another little stream running in a stone channel down the other side, had helped the river to make the confusing noises of last night; for at Nikko while it is raining the slightest trickle becomes a waterfall so long as the rain lasts.

I ascended the great stone stair under the shade of its sentinel cryptomerias, catching charming glimpses now and again of the valley as I rose gradually above it. No tourists that morning for a wonder, only a few Japanese pilgrims climbing the slippery, uneven steps in "geta" four or five inches high, with all the unconcern in the world and tattling incessantly the while. The stair, or avenue, whichever it is to be called, leads up to a broad, well cared-for road, which presently turns sharp to the right and leads far up between pines and bamboos to where the cryptomerias begin again, overshadowing another mighty stair of masonry which disappears beneath their shadows with a distant vision of something rose and grey. I knew that behind these shadows lay the chief of the wonders I had come to see—the famous mausoleum of Ieyasu—so after settling the preliminaries of admission with the affable but very verbose and consequently rather unintelligible personage who presides over such matters, I made straight for it, too impatient to keep the best for the last. At the top of the stair I found a huge torii of weather-stained granite standing at the entrance of a wide stone space amidst the trees, having a tall, many-tinted pagoda on the left, and by it a magnificent avenue stretching away to where the vista was closed by a dark torii in the far distance. All around were the dense masses of the giant trees, and in front the gate of grey and red which is seen from the approach—a gate of carved workmanship of flowers and beasts, real and imaginary, under a heavy roof of tiles. Inside is a wide court enclosed by the same wall of red and grey, and containing several gorgeously decorated buildings which nevertheless are



TORII AND PAGODA BEFORE THE PRECINCTS OF IEYASU.



not temples at all, but only "go-downs"—storehouses—and another of brownish-grey wood but with a wonderful sculptured frieze of monkeys amidst foliage and flowers, each monkey a piece of symbolism, as we are told. This is not a shrine either, nothing but a stable—for an unusual horse certainly, but still a stable—for the sacred steed, namely, which bears into the darkness of the whispering night the spirit of the mighty dead enshrined above; a quiet, unassuming little beast enough, as it seems to me, to carry so tremendous a rider, and generally to be seen prosaically munching the beans presented to it by native child or foreign tourist. Next one passes under another torii, this time of darkest bronze, though flashing here and there with a gleam of gold as the sunlight falls through the surrounding trees on the crest of the Tokugawa house. Everywhere here glitters this proud symbol—three leaves of a sort of hollyhock set within a circle—for two-and-a-half centuries the outward and visible sign of all the power and majesty in the land—of all, at least, that was a patent and tangible fact of daily life. For the majesty of that hidden sacrosanctity at Kyoto was but dimly conceived of in those days; known, indeed, and venerated, yet thought of perhaps but seldom, after the fashion of mankind with those unseen powers which seem safely negligible in the practical affairs of life. Next another court with wall and balustrade of grey hewn stone veiled and softened by delicately tinted moss and lichen. Two weird stone beasts—lions it is one's duty to believe—guard the entrance to this court, more beautiful even than the first with its two wonderful towers for bell and drum, its curious bronze candelabrum and lantern, interesting as probable relics of the ancient intercourse between Japan and Holland, in which the latter played perhaps no very dignified part. But the great point of this court is the fence and gate on the farther side. To call this exquisite thing a fence is an outrage, but neither is it a wall; it is a glorious screen, roofed as though it were a long, low house, the walls under its heavy eaves aglow with wonderful carved pierced panels of birds and flowers,

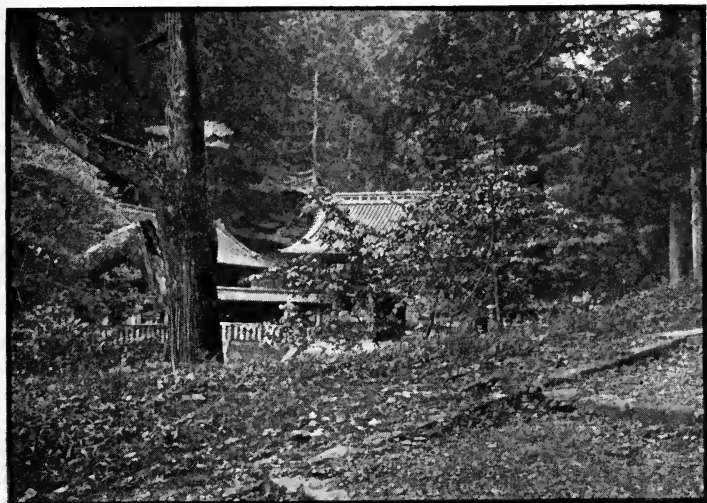
all exquisitely coloured. As for the gate, it is not a gate at all, but a dream of beauty in white and gold and delicate colour; of fairy monsters where beam ends ought to be, of twisting dragons and curving roofs and golden bells—a gate not to be described. They show how one of the beautiful white columns has its delicate pattern carved upside down; for it seems that Japan too lay open to the “envy of the gods,” and this “Evil-averting Pillar” is a sort of Far Eastern ring of Polycrates—the deprecation of one blessed with too much for mortal’s safe possession, and trying thus apprehensively to detract from the too great sum of perfectness. Another court, with other buildings—shut in this time with screens of golden trellis and fairy birds; then another wonderful door of white and gold. Outside this all must leave their shoes or sandals, for the hall above the lacquered steps beyond the gate is none other than the Temple itself—the goal to which all these subsidiary beauties have been tending. Here, in the covered matted space between the door and the steps beyond, the orthodox prostrate themselves, casting at the same time their offerings upon the mats before them (whence, I have observed, they are swept up afterwards by an attendant with a broom). One leaves one’s shoes there; then, going round to the side, one gets in at last through a door which leaves a confused impression of gilded lattice-work upon the eye, and leads to a darkish chamber, shut off by a magnificent golden screen from the sanctuary in front, and separated by two or three black lacquered steps from a larger hall behind. There, at this my first visit at least—and I have seen it often since—everybody squatted on the floor while a priest recited something in a rapid monotone—a prayer, I suppose—and then going up the steps to the closed golden doors, beyond which none may see, he brought down, after some more devotions, a little white stand of the kind generally seen in Shinto temples, covered with little paper envelopes about the shape and size of a finger, one of which he presented to each pilgrim, who raised it respectfully to his forehead before putting it into his bosom. My turn came next, and I accepted

the gift with polite effusion, though I knew from other experiences what it would turn out to be—a little slip of plain white wood, very holy, no doubt, but a little uninteresting to behold. After the distribution of these curiosities he proceeded to explain to the worshippers what lay behind the closed golden doors; shrines, I understood him to say, containing the tablets of the posthumous names of Yoritomo and Hideyoshi, to the left and right of the central door, which belonged to the deity of the place himself. Up the black lacquered steps on our right was a wide matted hall, its panelled ceiling looking like a piece of elaborate jewellery with its enamels of green and blue, its wonderful chased metal-work of golden dragons and Tokugawa crests, and its walls whereon strange creatures disported themselves on a golden background surmounted by an elaborately carved and coloured frieze of flowers and birds. Of course I knew beforehand that this temple was a Shinto one, and accordingly did not expect to find anything in it, yet when one comes actually to see all this gorgeousness it seems hard to believe it can enshrine nothing at all, absolutely nothing except a round metal mirror hanging above a lacquered stand on which were gilt paper “gohei.” There is also an elaborately decorated drum on another stand, and not another thing in the place of any kind. A Shinto priest in flowing garments of pea-green silk is always sitting—or kneeling, whichever may most correctly describe the usual Japanese attitude—beside the door of this oratory with an air of immovable repose worthy of a Buddha; a dignified-looking personage whose face quite lacks the ecclesiastical stamp so unmistakable in the Buddhist clergy. For the Shinto priest is not, strictly speaking, an ecclesiastical personage at all; he has his turn of duty at the temple, but the rest of his life is wholly secular, and spent in lay costume among quite lay surroundings; amongst other things he is married as a rule. Most Shinto temples, as far as I have seen, are empty all day, but not this one. You will never find it without one of these immovable green personages, speaking to nobody, looking at nothing and showing

no sign of life. I had almost begun to wonder if they might not after all be waxworks, till one day I noticed instead of the usual book (which one had assumed as in duty bound, to be one of devotion) a quite unmistakable "shimbun"—nothing in the world but a daily paper. By degrees, as my stay here has lengthened itself out, I have found these dignitaries to be very pleasant and agreeable personages, but the first impression was distinctly one of awe.

If one is "doing" the temples one goes next into the court outside the oratory to see a priestess in scarlet and white perform the kagura dance on the elaborately decorated stage and then to see the collection of historical relics contained in the low, carved buildings which form the wall of the court—things which had belonged to Ieyasu, clothes and furniture, exquisite utensils of gold lacquer, all bearing the same cognisance as the temple buildings themselves, swords of wonderful temper in gorgeous scabbards of gold lacquer, garments said to have been worn by the deity of the place himself, his helmet and the frail court headdress of black lacquered gauze, more durable, it would seem, than the shrewd brain that once thought and schemed beneath it. Last of all, one goes to the tomb in whose honour all this magnificence has sprung up on the once lonely mountain-side. It is not to be found among any of these splendours, but far up the hill behind, approached by several long—very long—flights of moss-grown stone steps which ascend in seemingly endless succession through the dark cryptomerias. The temple attendant or guide who goes with one (one is never allowed to go alone) always seems wholly absorbed in the fact that the pillars of the balustrade and the steps are carved several together out of one piece of stone; perhaps they think this is the only sort of fact a foreigner can appreciate, so they keep on calling one's attention to it. But this, pleasing as it seems to them, is to me less wonderful than the beauty and solemnity of the stair itself as it rises up and up under the dark shadows of the mighty trees that guard it amidst the never-ceasing sound of the waters that rush down the mountain just

beyond, as though singing an endless lullaby to the immortal dead. At the top of the stair one comes to another oratory, all in black and gold, standing in a gravelled court. Behind it stands a moss-grown stone wall with heavy gates of bronze and gold, and within this is the lonely tomb of plain bronze. In front of the tomb is a low stone altar bearing an incense-burner and a stork and lotus plant, also of bronze—emblems of the Buddhist faith of the deceased. Nothing more; no pomp of gold or colour, no inscription, no name even, on sarcophagus



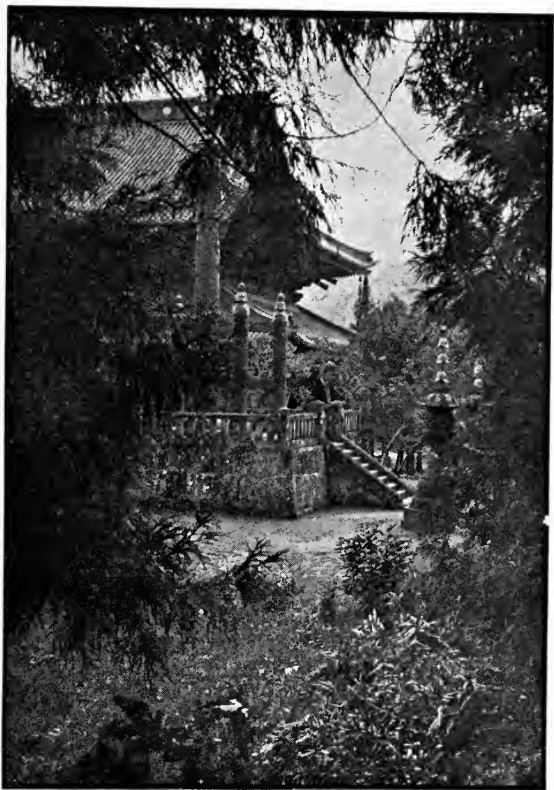
GATE LEADING TO PRECINCTS OF IEMITSU.

or gate; he who rests there has left a name which need owe nothing to such aids to immortality, so the tomb stands silent, nameless, unadorned, yet none the less impressive in its lonely majesty beneath the shadows of the trees.

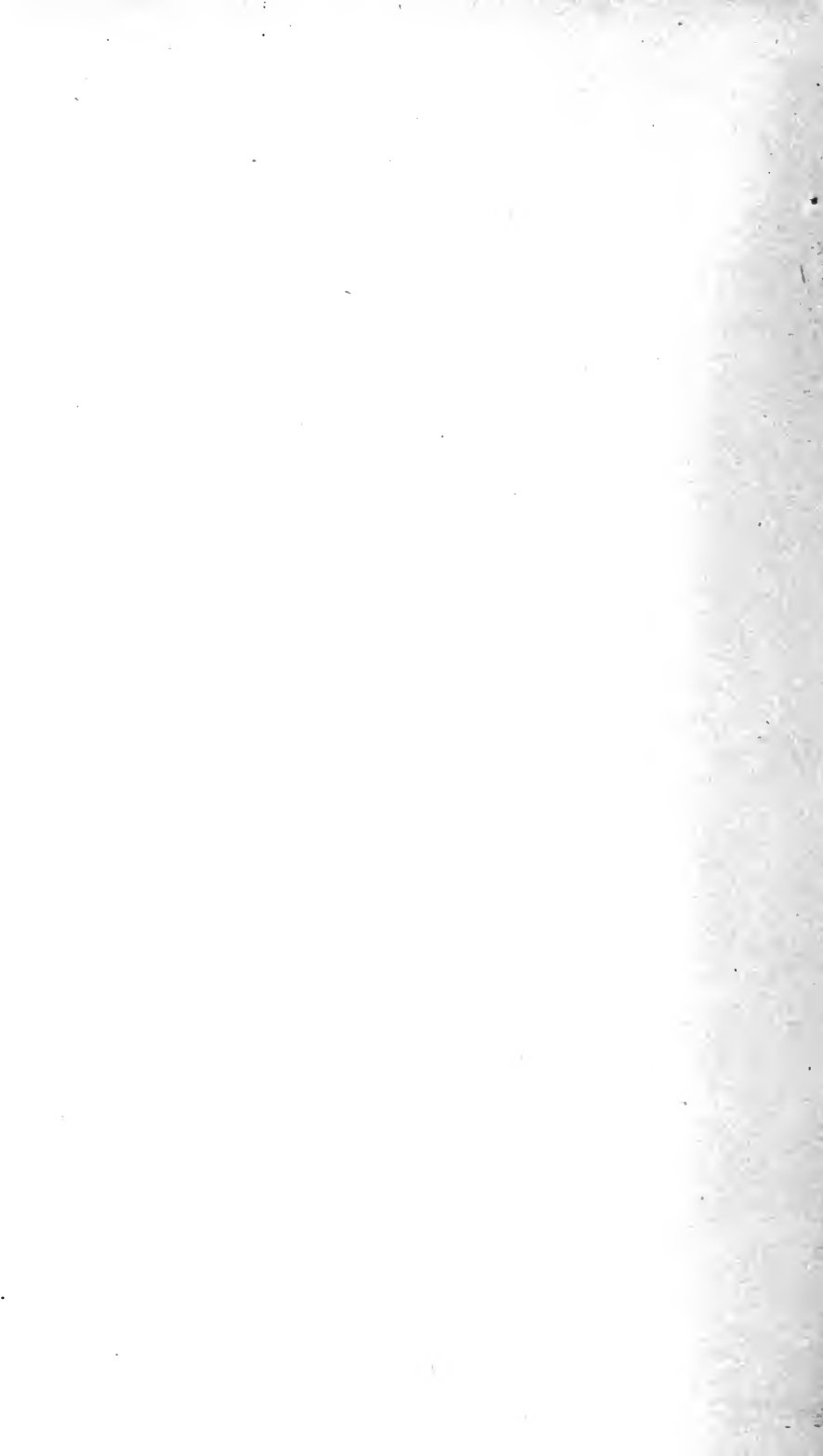
But the mausoleum of Ieyasu, though the chief, is not the whole of the glories of Nikko. Not far from his precincts are those of his grandson Iemitsu, heir of his policy and sharer to some extent in his renown. It is another bewilderment of gold and colour, of lofty stair

and glowing gateway, with another glittering oratory at the end of it all. Less splendid all these buildings are; scarcely less beautiful in effect, set as they are on the steep hillside, almost lost in their densely shadowing groves. Iemitsu, I conclude, is not, like his grandfather, a Shinto god; he seems, at least, to be left in possession of the religion he professed in life, for his oratory is quite obviously Buddhist, full of the ornaments usually found in temples of that persuasion, but all of them beautiful objects of art, far removed from that tawdriness that one has learnt to associate with the majority of less exalted Buddhist fanes. The attendants at this temple hardly convey the same impression of dignity as those at the Shinto shrine of Iemitsu's great ancestor; they are much less disregarding of foreign visitors, much more inclined to conversation. One day when I had been up there some time trying to take in the details of the exquisite decoration I became aware of some excitement at the door, and presently one of these holy persons came up and informed me that the others were anxious to know what had been the cost of the not very remarkable pair of patent leather shoes I had left outside. He seemed delighted with the answer given at random, and ran joyfully off to communicate it to his colleagues, still engaged in heated discussion at the entrance. So indecorous an episode could never, I feel sure, have occurred in connection with the pea-green guardians of the other shrine.

Other temples and shrines there are besides, scattered about among the dense greenery on this sacred hillside, older, most of them, by far than the great mausolea, and all reflecting, to some extent, their glory. But the charm of the place is not these, though they add greatly to it. It is the extraordinary beauty of the surroundings as a whole; the huge cryptomerias standing in mysterious groves or stately avenues; the beauty of the flowers and ferns below; the ever-present sound of falling water; the glimpses of blue mountain and sunny valley, of curving roof or rosy wall caught through the tall columns of the trees. Up and down in every direction are walks belong-



"HALL OF THE THREE BUDDHAS," NIKKO.

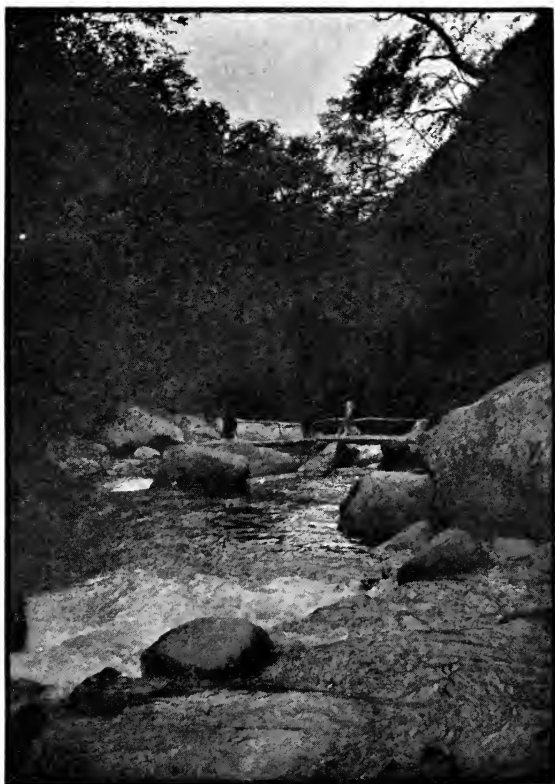


ing wholly to fairyland. One, for instance, outside the temple precincts, leading up by ancient water-worn steps of hewn stone under immemorial pines and cryptomerias whose dark hues are relieved till the end of summer by the flowers beneath them and later by the flaming tints of autumn in the woods behind, on one side has a rushing, tumbling cascade dancing headlong down amidst the lights and shadows of the wood, on the other blue glimpses of mountain and plain beyond, and at the end a waterfall and a last dainty shrine. It is a walk altogether of extraordinary beauty, but somehow suggestive of some wonderful illusion of the stage. So far, indeed, it seems from the ordinary landscapes of real life that one half expects some supernatural being to appear from behind one of the giant tree-trunks or jutting rocks—some dryad or nymph of grove or stream, or some saint or warrior of old to bar the shadowy way against our alien foot. However, if beings not of earth do dwell in these charming glades, they are spirits gently tolerant of mortal company, for no apparition has as yet ever turned me back from the mossy steps of the ascent; indeed, so little alarming is the place to native pilgrims that they have a special fondness for picnicking there.

Then, besides the temple groves of Nikko, there are endless charming scenes which owe nothing of their loveliness to piety or art or royal pride. You go across the Inarigawa along paths winding through woods and fields full of every lovely thing, including sheets of azalea blossom, till you get to the waterfall called Kirifuri—Falling Mist—and see the marvellous view of mountain ranges and wide, far-reaching plain spread out as on a map; or, another day, up the valley of the Daiyagawa between the river and the fields, then along the course of another lovely stream, through masses of flowering trees, till you get to exquisite Urami with its two falls plunging into the still waters of its rocky basin overshadowed by lofty trees. A favourite spot this with Japanese pleasure-seekers, and a pretty sight it is to see a bevy of young girls with their delicately-tinted kimonos showing in bright relief against the dark rocks behind the dizzy fall

as they shuffle with laughter over the slippery rocks in the high wooden clogs which make me feel unsteady on the level ground. Or you may go to lovely Lake Chusenji high up in the mountains, or a dozen other excursions, each more charming than the other. If one does not want to go far or do any climbing one has but to cross the river to where certain ancient images of Amida the Buddha sit a hundred in number and gaze at the loveliness before them, opposite the sacred spot where a saint wrote something unintelligible on an inaccessible rock over a boiling chasm of madly rushing waters by the simple expedient of throwing his paint-brush at it. He was indeed a wonderful saint, this Kobo Daishi, and the amount he seems to have written and painted is really astounding. He was a great traveller too, and one of the earliest visitors to Nikko; a thousand years before our time he went there and called it by its present name, which we are told means "Sunny Splendour." But perhaps when he gave this name to Nikko he had never seen it in a typhoon, with all its mountains hidden in impenetrable blackness, its mighty groves bending like saplings before the screeching blast, and all its lovely emerald waters turned to roaring torrents of brown foam as they dash madly along, grinding boulders and tree-trunks together with a noise like thunder as they go. Or perhaps, on the contrary, he had seen such a sight too often, for we are told that until his visit the fair region was given over wholly to the assaults of these spirits of the storm, and that it was he who delivered it from their power and bestowed on it its new name of good omen as a hint to these powers of violence that their day was gone and that henceforth they were expected to keep within the cave, where, Aeolus-like, they had their dwelling on the wild peaks above.

But it is useless to speak of the endless charm of all the place. Foreigners come and go the whole summer through, and so do the Japanese in hundreds, it would seem, each day, mostly in large parties, obviously "personally conducted." And many of them are (or were in the season—it is late now) a great delight to behold.



THE DELL OF URAMI.



They used to go out daily in kurumas and kagos in their best clothes apparently, charming to see in dove colour and grey and pink and gold. It is their way to go to the picnic places and the waterfalls and laugh their little gentle laugh and say the same polite little inanities at each, no doubt; and they go and are polite to the great "miya" too. I have seen them there often enough as they trip up with a smile and an air of polite interest and cast their mite into the treasury—(it is a curious fact, by

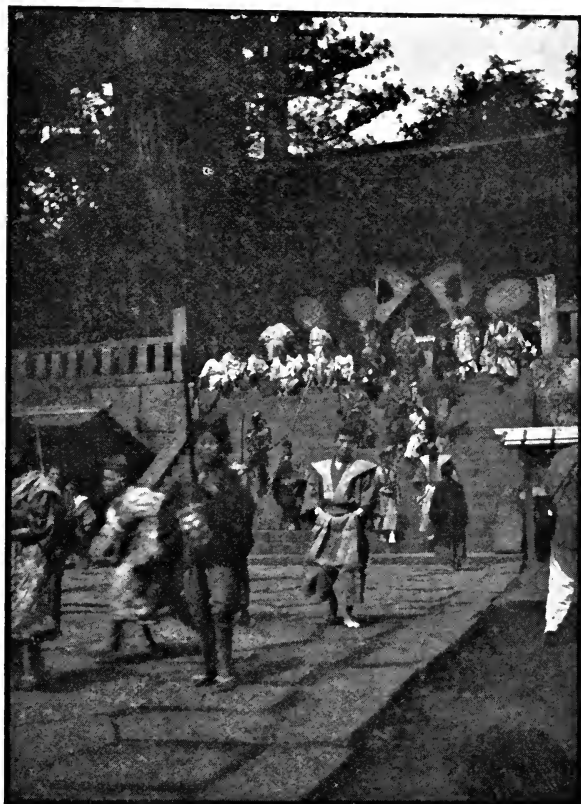


LAKE CHUSENJI.

the way, that the sleeves of the most elegant crêpes and gorgeous silks never seem to produce anything more in the way of a contribution than those of the striped cotton of the humbler devotee). All kneel down with the same air of polite salutation to the powers above, clap their hands with decorous propriety, then rise and gaze smilingly for a moment at the masterpieces of national art, and so depart. I wonder greatly how they really feel in the presence of this temple, what lurks under this smiling acquiescence in all they see. Religion they take

lightly enough, one knows ; the spirit of that enthusiasm dwells not in them in any wise ; but this shrine is not merely a place of Shinto sanctity ; it is a sort of Westminster Abbey and Valhalla combined. Yet they seem infinitely less impressed by it—to judge by appearances at least—than I am who have no part or lot in the matter. No one figure in our history stands out as this man Ieyasu does in theirs, nor is deification customary among us as an expression of national gratitude ; but were it otherwise, I imagine we should take a pilgrimage to the shrine of such a national hero a little more seriously than these folk seem to do. Still it is impossible to tell. No doubt any one of these people's fathers or grandfathers would have cheerfully cut himself open for the slightest advantage of the house whose founder is the deity here ; yet it is quite possible that they too, when they visited the shrine, smiled with no less deferential vacuity and lack of apparent interest. For, after all, it is not polite in Japan to be emotional, especially in the presence of superiors, and it may very well be that that look of polite indifference may have by no means the significance it would have in our own case.

If you are at Nikko in the summer or the autumn you may chance to see one of the two festivals of the great temple. A wonderful turn-out this matsuri indeed, and everybody in the village takes part in it with great pride. The beautiful red and gold go-downs of the temple produce beforehand stores of ancient armour and dresses—no curio-dealer's trumped-up antiques, but authentic relics of Old Japan ; flags and swords and spears and other weapons innumerable, to be paraded by the villagers in the grand procession. Early in the morning a great drum beaten solemnly at intervals warns the world that something great is afoot, and everybody flocks to the miya to see the function. When I got to the great stone torii at the entrance to the temple precincts I found the outer court full of people, native and foreign onlookers, and many strange and picturesque figures in the garments of olden days waiting with an air of conscious dignity to be summoned each to his place in the coming pageant.



WAITING FOR THE PROCESSION.



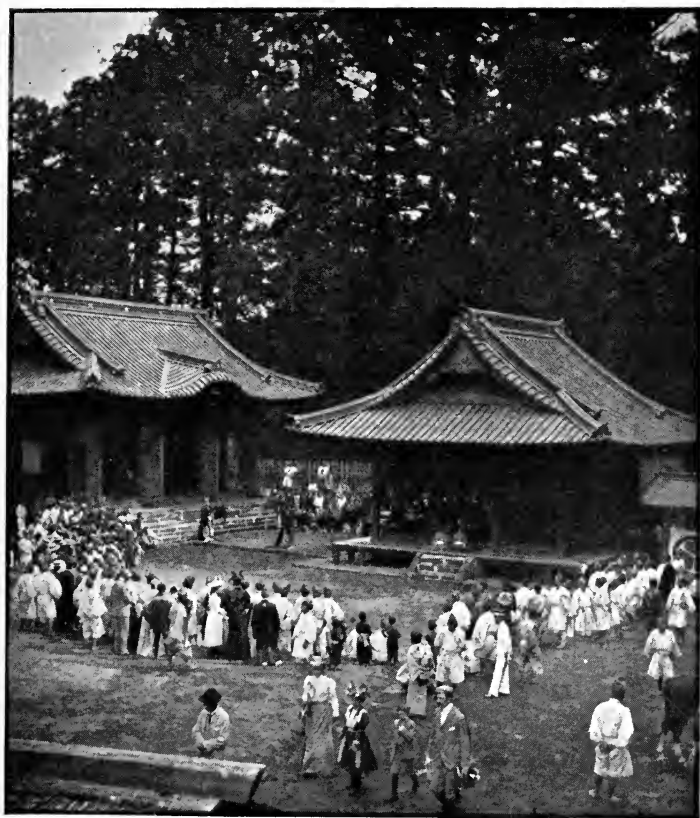
There were horses too, gorgeously caparisoned in crimson silk, as yet without riders, standing waiting under the trees. For a long time nothing happened except that the crowd of picturesque figures increased inside the temple courts, some in full armour of the familiar type—some of the suits quite gorgeous to behold, others more ordinary; samurai in winged surcoats and divided skirts and wearing



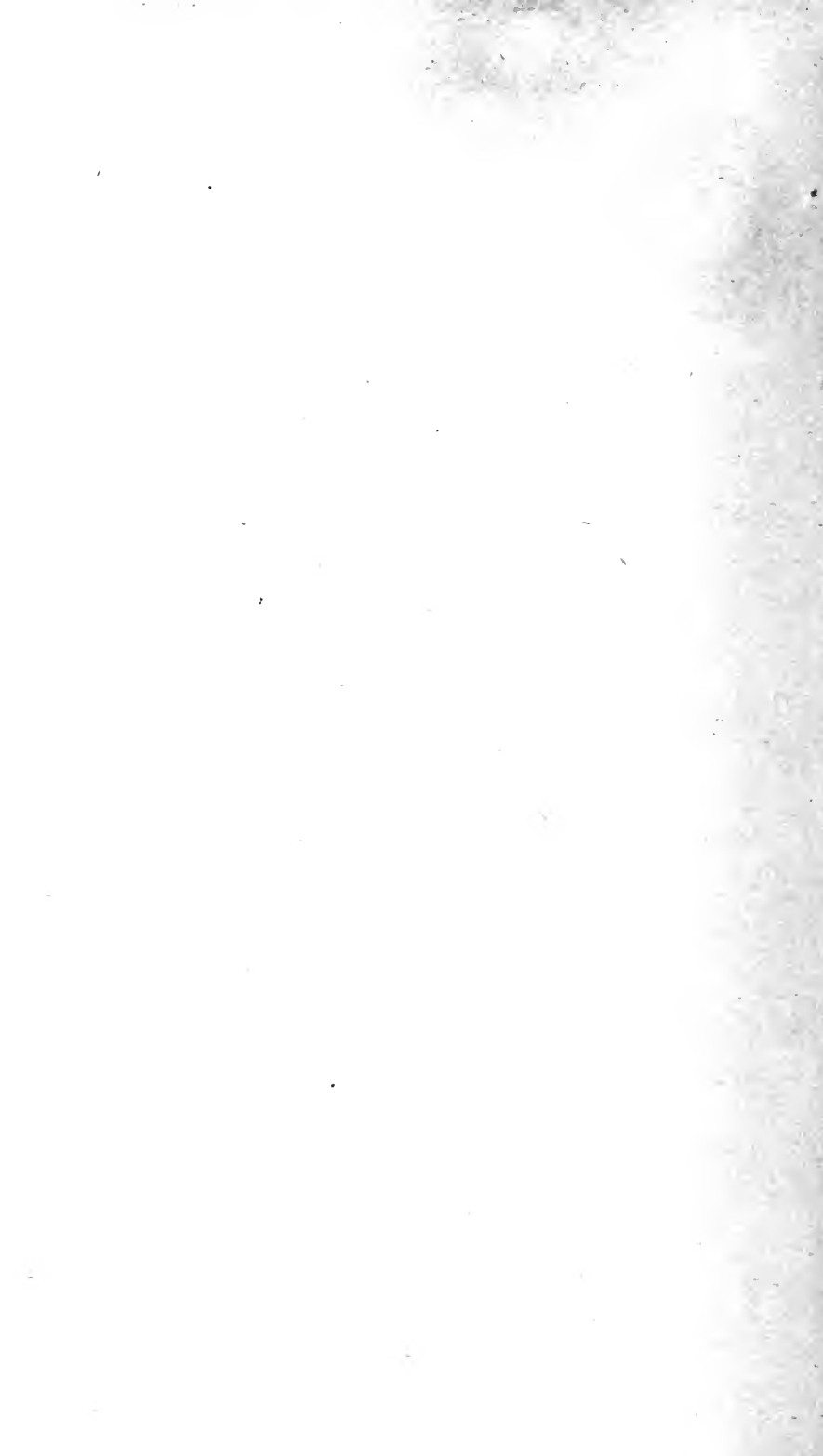
THE PROCESSION ON ITS WAY DOWN.

the two swords of their order; bearers of all sorts of weapons and insignia, and scores of men in white with short nether garments and loose sleeves and curious peaked hats of black. At last the crowd of representatives of Old Japan grew thicker, the beating of the drum became more animated, warriors, standard-bearers and all began to range themselves according to their

several grades, the horses were brought to the foot of the steps and a priest in gorgeous robes of white silk and black lacquered court hat mounted carefully on each and drew to one side to wait. At last appeared a brilliantly coloured group in the red gateway at the top of the steps—bearers of tall emblems of mysterious import, banners, and spears, and red things that looked like oars. Down they came, warriors and standard-bearers, in costumes of bewildering variety, accompanied by two huge lions with prodigious gilt heads and very human legs, each preceded by an individual in gorgeous robes and a blood-curdling mask. More attendants and more warriors, with at intervals a white-robed priest on horseback surrounded by attendants on foot, the horses stepping gingerly down the stone steps outside the torii; priestesses in scarlet and white followed by a band of musicians in gorgeous brocades, producing from flutes and conches that unearthly wailing which one is familiar with as Shinto music; then bands of the men in white staggering under the weight of the sacred palanquins—the “O Mikoshi”—grunting and shouting as they went, and assiduously fanned by their friends who ran along in crowds beside them. After the palanquins came the sacred horse, whom I had hitherto known only in his gorgeous stable above—no earthly rider on his back, of course. Down the long approach they went to the wailing of the orchestra till they reached a pair of small temples which stand among the trees below. There the procession halted; the sacred palanquins were put with veneration into one and the priests took up their position in the other, while the rest of those who had been in the procession grouped themselves picturesquely outside. A solemn feast seemed to take place with much ceremony in the building where the priests were sitting in immovable dignity, each with his white, fan-shaped wand held straight up in front, just as one sees pictures of old Mikados sitting to all eternity. Trays and cups of black and gold lacquer were handed round and the honourable viands, whatever they were, were partaken of with much ceremony.



THE SOLEMN DANCE.



Finally a solemn dance was executed in the space between the two temples by four performers in dresses of antique magnificence with wonderful trains of orange brocade which they managed with amazing grace and skill, after which the procession rearranged itself and returned to the great miya to the same distressful strains as before, and all was over for the day. Next morning, as I was sitting sketching in the grove near the temple, I heard those wailings and thumpings which always mean something in the sacred dancing line, so I went up in a great hurry and found the inner court full of people watching a kagura performance by a dancer in an extraordinary costume including very voluminous hakama of red and yellow brocade and a mask of a horse's head with a long yellow mane hanging down behind. The dance consisted of stepping stiffly round the stage in time to the music, jerking the head and neck, also in time, and violently throwing handfuls of something that looked like maize at the frieze round the inside of the building. The dance stopped with extraordinary abruptness, and another performer rushed on, also in brocaded hakama and displaying a mask which grinned broadly with a very comical expression of surprise and delight. This dancer had a fishing-rod with a very large and brilliant "tai" fish at the end of the line, which fish was caught continually in the course of the dance with gestures of astonishment and delight which went very well with the expression of the mask. But what it all meant I have not the very slightest idea. Last came a warlike figure who danced with gestures of immense ferocity and ended by scrambling a number of round white cakes among the spectators, who rushed wildly for them. I joined in the *melée* and triumphantly secured one—a soft and probably tasteless thing of uncooked rice flour (I meant to keep it as a holy souvenir, but, alas! the ever-present rats sacrilegiously devoured it in the night). After the scrambling all the native spectators—I was the only foreigner present as it happened—adjourned to the red lacquered verandah which surrounds the court, and taking their places with much decorum on the matting spread

there for the occasion, had a grand tea-drinking all together. I daresay they would have given me some, but my courage was not equal to joining the party, though I had scrambled for the cakes with the best, so I departed in respectful silence, and for me at least the proceedings were at an end.

Who then, you may ask, is the numen—the divine spirit of this place? What manner of man in his earthly life was this Ieyasu whose name is heard so constantly here, yet conveys so vague an impression to most of the



IEYASU.

foreign visitors to his shrine? (thought of perhaps by many of them simply as a word possessed of quite an unreasonable number of letters, seeing that as far as the current native pronunciation goes it might just as well be spelt "Ias"). So little idea of personality does this name convey that there is a tendency in the mind of the casual tourist to look on it as the name of the temple itself; the one temple is "Ieyasu," the other is "Iemitsu," and both may be "done" in a morning.

Yet surely the fascination which comes with a long stay in this place is in no way lessened by the knowledge

that the true memorial of this man is not the lovely shrine before our eyes but the two centuries and a half of unbroken peace he gave to his country, torn for five hundred years and more by internecine strife and deluged incessantly in its own blood.

It is a curious thing that this great person is said to have found no regular biographer in our sense of the word ; no record, it would seem, is in existence of what one would most like to know—of the man himself as he appeared to his contemporaries, to his friends and household ; such glimpses of individuality as might be open to those who came into contact with him. But the consideration of abstract subjects or the analysis of character does not seem to be an occupation congenial to the Japanese mind, which rests satisfied with the concrete fact, the outward phenomenon, to be accepted without discussion. Ieyasu was a great general, a great statesman, and a great lawgiver ; these were facts patent to all, and accordingly his battles, his policy, and his legislation are duly chronicled. Such were the facts, and there is a list of them. But the personality of the man seems to have been lost in the glitter of his achievements while he lived and in the halo of veneration which surrounded him after his death. It may be that in the age of the "Great Peace," while his descendants still sat upon the Shogun's throne, none might dare to write such a thing, and, indeed, had any one undertaken such a task one may perhaps doubt whether strict accuracy would have been the distinguishing feature of the narrative ; and since the Meiji era dawned in light upon the land Young Japan has been too busy with politics and progress to think of writing about anything so unpractical as the greatness of the past. Nor is this, I suppose, very much to be wondered at. However, I am afraid I am so uncivilised as to be more interested in the past than in the future of this country. Its past is unique and wholly characteristic ; the goal to which it is hasting with so much eagerness is, to all appearance, nothing but a state of affairs with which one is familiar, perhaps even a little tired, at home, so that, however admirable it may be,

one can hardly look on it as very full of novelty, and I cannot but be sorry, for my own part, when I see these lovely shrines, that there seems at present to be no accessible portrait of the man in whose honour they still exist.

Ieyasu was born in 1542, amidst the troublous times which preceded the downfall of the Ashikaga Shogunate. His family was a branch of the great Minamoto clan whose members had taken the name of Tokugawa from a country place where they had lived for some time, apparently in no very prosperous circumstances. His own father was a small baron, lord of the castle of Okazaki, a small place now on the Tokaido railway, and there his earliest youth seems to have been spent, till when he was about seven years old hostilities between his father and the famous baron Takeda Shingen, one of the unquiet spirits of the age, led to his being sent as a hostage to a Buddhist temple near Sumpu, now called Shizuoka, and in that quiet retreat he remained till near the age of seventeen, passing his time in the acquirement of the learning and accomplishments proper to the samurai of the period. His early career seems to have been one of great difficulty; nevertheless by the time of the Taiko Hideyoshi's death he had won for himself so strong a position that the power of the latter slipped quite easily into his hands. But his new position was by no means secure, though the opposition he met with was at first more secret than open. He showed great moderation and a quite extraordinary magnanimity in dealing with opponents, but the jealousy of the great barons who resented his predominance was not thus to be appeased, and at last the appeal to arms was made on the field of Sekigahara. There, in A.D. 1600, was fought one of the bloodiest battles in the whole of the sanguinary course of Japanese history, for many thousands, it is said, had fallen before the setting sun left Ieyasu in possession of the field. He was so far from losing his head in the intoxication of success that he at once entered on that far-seeing policy of gentleness and conciliation which was the foundation on which he afterwards reared so great and

lasting an edifice. He spared the lives of nearly all who had sided against him, and though he redistributed all the fiefs in the Empire, he contrived in so doing to reward his supporters without laying too heavy a burden on the shoulders of those who had fought against him, all of whom he treated with a leniency beyond their hopes. "He is beginning his reign," says the Jesuit Father Valigniani, writing to his superiors at home, "with great mildness and clemency. He has refused to avail himself



IEYASU'S SCHOOLROOM IN THE TEMPLE. THE KAKEMONO IS HIS PORTRAIT, GIVEN BY PRINCE KEIKI TOKUGAWA, THE LAST OF THE SHOGUNS.

of all the power and license that victory always brings in its train, but more especially in Japan, and has pardoned nearly all." But the redistribution thus tactfully conducted was nevertheless so astutely managed that had any wished to rebel against him it was no longer in his power, so skilfully had the estates of those whose allegiance was doubtful been wedged in among those of the victor's own family and supporters. So they, one and all, decided to make the best of it, and, either from gratitude or policy, nearly every Daimyo became in fact, if not in

name, a vassal of the Tokugawa house. All this settlement was not, of course, made in a day, but the work of pacification he appears to have begun at once, trying by every means in his power to show that he was ready to forget the past and bore no malice against those who had been his foes, grieving only for the blood that had been shed. To those who would accept his friendship he gave it freely, and those who would not he left in peace. He received the title of Shogun from the Mikado and removed the seat of government to Yedo, now Tokyo, which had long been the centre of his own personal power and was also free from those traditions of degenerate effeminacy which had become so closely associated with Kyoto. There he set to work energetically upon the task of the reform and regeneration of the country and the bestowal on it of the much-needed blessings of peace and good government, and, incidentally no doubt, the strengthening of the hold of his own family upon the Shogunate. He slowly and surely drew the whole country into his own power, but it is evident that he managed at the same time to secure the confidence and respect of all classes. Amongst other things he had gained the reputation of never breaking a promise, and the absolute reliance which was placed upon his word was probably one of the secrets of his influence.

After holding the Shogunate only three years, Ieyasu resigned it to his son Hidetada, with a view, no doubt, to rendering the dignity hereditary in his family. Hidetada remained at Yedo as Shogun, while Ieyasu retired to Shizuoka, then called Sumpu. From this retirement he seems to have governed no less effectively than before, and to have remained the real ruler of the country, though by leaving the routine work of the government to Hidetada he seems to have gained time to devote himself to the cultivation and encouragement of the arts of peace.

Here he showed that on one important point at least his opinion was different from that of his successors, the question, namely, of intercourse with foreigners. Whether their subsequent exclusion had a good or a bad effect on

Japan, neither praise nor blame can be laid at the door of the founder of the dynasty under which she lived a hermit for so long. Ieyasu probably knew very little about the West and its ways, but he clearly regarded it with a thoroughly Japanese curiosity, and had plainly a strong desire to encourage communication between his country and those beyond the unknown sea.

The year of his birth, 1542, was, as it happened, the year of the discovery of Japan by Europe in the person of certain Portuguese fugitives who then landed on these shores. Soon afterwards Mendez Pinto landed on the island of Tanegashima, where he was kindly received by the lord of the place, to whom he made a present of firearms which was so much appreciated that in a few short months, he says, many hundreds had been made in imitation. Pinto made such a good thing out of his venture, and carried back to China such glowing reports of the new market thus opened up, that his countrymen flocked thither in great numbers. Soon a regular trade with Portugal was established; large numbers of Portuguese merchants took up their abode in Japan, and in A.D. 1600 the number of foreigners on Japanese soil was increased by the arrival of the shipwrecked Englishman Will Adams and his comrades. The letters (still extant) which Adams wrote home, besides giving a very attractive picture of the country as it was then, show that Ieyasu not only treated him kindly, but that he showed a strong desire to learn from him what manner of place the unknown West might be. Adams seems to have learnt Japanese and to have acted in many ways as confidential adviser to the great Shogun. He says he greatly pleased him by building him a ship of eighty tons after the English fashion and also by "learning him some points of geometry and understanding of the art of mathematics with other things." All which seems to have roused the envy of the Portuguese and other foreigners, who urged Ieyasu to put him to death, but he refused to do so, and Adams remained in high favour with him. After a number of years had passed, however, the sailor's longing for his country became irresistible, and he at last persuaded

Ieyasu to allow him to leave Japan, but for some reason he never availed himself of the permission and died in Japan on the estate which the Shogun had given him. His presence in this country was the beginning of what might have turned out an important trade with Great Britain, for his letters induced the East India Company to send out a ship called the *Clove*, whose captain bore a letter from James I. to Ieyasu to which the latter replied in friendly terms, expressing his desire for friendship with England and granting a liberal charter to English traders in Japan. A further idea of his views on the subject of foreign intercourse may be gained from the account of his own adventures given by one Don Rodrigo de Vivero, ex-governor of Manila, who was wrecked off the coast of Japan on his way back to Spain. He also was kindly received by Ieyasu, who treated him with great ceremony and granted him a trading charter for Spain. His letters give an interesting description of the court at Shizuoka and wax very enthusiastic over the beauties of the road thither. Besides the loveliness of the Tokaido he mentions another point which, like it, may still be appreciated by the visitor in modern Japan, saying pathetically that "crowds besieged my residence at Sumpu as they had done at Yedo."

From all the above it seems probable that had nothing occurred to put a stop to the intercourse with Europe thus carefully inaugurated by Ieyasu what we think of as "Old Japan"—that is the Japan of isolation—would never have existed. Had communication with Europe and mutual exchange of commerce and ideas been suffered to develop as he seems to have intended that they should it is hard to think what the result in this country might have been. Had Japan been allowed gradually to assimilate such parts of Western civilisation as were suited to the genius of her people she might have arrived at a stage of material progress in no way inferior to that at which she has arrived with such amazing suddenness to-day, without having had to make any break with her past or to be tempted in the excitement of the sudden change to discard the national and natural

elements of her civil life for others whose sole recommendation is their being exotic and artificial. But it was not to be, and the inquiry into the causes which led this country, hitherto so hospitable, to close up like an oyster only a few years after the great Shogun's death involves the consideration of certain facts, not all of them too creditable to Europe, which cast the dark shadow of intolerance and cruelty over the fair shrines of Nikko. For Ieyasu, hitherto the most tolerant of rulers, came before his death to denounce Christianity, then known for half a century in Japan, as a "false and corrupt sect," and Iemitsu, his grandson, stamped it out with fire and sword, closing the country to all foreigners upon pain of death, lest the hated teaching should once more gain an entrance to the land.

To explain fully how this came about would be to write the history of Christianity in Japan in a letter. I should have to tell you the whole romantic story of the coming of St. Francis Xavier to the country; how he heard of it first from a Japanese named Anjiro, whom he met when engaged in his attempt to convert the Indies and who became his first Japanese disciple, and of all the toils and hardships he underwent in his efforts to spread the gospel among the island people. His labours in Japan lasted only two years, but the church which he had founded survived and flourished amazingly under the care of his disciples, and met at first with no opposition in official quarters. There was, in fact, no government to issue decrees, whether for or against it, and amidst the all-pervading clash of arms the sound of the new teaching was at first not heard loudly enough to attract the attention of the great ones of the land. So the seed sown in much discouragement was suffered to take root, and in the South-west at least it grew and prospered exceedingly.

As time went on the great baron Oda Nobunaga gradually made himself the chief force in the country, and acquired so much power as to constitute in himself something like a central government. To him, indifferent as he was to all religious questions on their merits, the new faith came as an acceptable weapon against the

Buddhist clergy, whom, on account of their great power and militant disposition, he hated with a very special hatred. In this struggle against the ecclesiastical power he saw a valuable ally in a rival sect, and accordingly he gave the Christians every encouragement in his power, taking them under his protection and giving them leave to build and proselytise everywhere. So great was the favour shown by him to the new faith that the letters of the missionaries, who probably did not appreciate his motives, are full of his praises, and they were evidently under the impression that this not very saintly personage was on the high-road to become a Christian. Under his patronage churches were built—one even in Kyoto itself, thus realising one of the dreams of the saintly Xavier—and not only this, but a deputation from certain Christian daimyos of the South-west was actually sent to Rome to lay the homage of these princes at the feet of the Pope, who received them with all honour, and sent back letters in flattering terms, commending their zeal and accepting their homage. Unfortunately the zeal of some of the converted daimyos showed itself in other ways than this; and the work of evangelisation proceeded apace in their provinces after a fashion not very suitable, perhaps, to a message of peace, yet which was in accordance with the spirit of the age and certainly not without some resemblance to the methods of theological controversy in favour in Europe at the time. Some of these princes roundly gave their subjects the choice between baptism and banishment; and under the persuasion of this argument we learn that twenty thousand were baptized in a single day. Apart from this, however, much real progress had apparently been made in the evangelisation of the country by the time Ieyasu came into supreme power. His attitude towards the new religion was wholly one of toleration, and he made its adherents no exception to his conciliatory policy. Unfortunately the members of the various religious orders who had by this time gained a footing in Japan seem to have departed very far from the evangelical spirit of their saintly pioneer, and to have been more concerned with their own rivalries than



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

The portrait here given of St. Francis Xavier is from a photograph furnished by the College of St. Francis Xavier of New York, and is vouched for as his traditional likeness.



with the spread of the gospel. Their quarrels and mutual recriminations seem to have suggested alike to Hideyoshi and to Ieyasu that more than a religious propaganda was at work, and as time went on it became evident that Ieyasu was not becoming better disposed towards the Christians. The arrival of the Dutch, moreover, did nothing to forward the Christian cause. They, actuated by political and commercial jealousy of the countries of the Catholic missionaries, not to speak of religious animosities, seem to have done their utmost to increase the suspicions already present to the ex-Shogun's mind as to the secret objects of the propaganda, and it would be strange indeed if their words had no effect in view of the fact that the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the Jesuits and the Franciscans, continually accused one another of intending eventually to bring Japan under the rule of their own country, though the extant letters of the missionaries in no way suggest that any of them were actuated by such a motive.

In 1614 the blow fell, and Ieyasu issued an edict in which he declared his conviction that the Christians had not come to Japan for the sake of commerce, but to spread their creed with a view to effecting a change in the government and usurping possession of the country. By this edict all Jesuits were banished to Nagasaki and all native Christians to Tsugaru, and strict measures were taken to force the latter to renounce their belief, a special bureau or government department being instituted for the purpose. Ieyasu died in 1616, and his death was the signal for a violent persecution, for in the same year his son, who was now Shogun in fact as well as in name, put the decree in force relentlessly, and a series of ferocious cruelties began all over the country. Tortures of unheard of fiendishness were employed to make the Christians recant, and scenes of blood and horror were the distinguishing mark of the next quarter of a century. Thousands, the greater number simple peasants, suffered martyrdom with a heroism which shines no less brightly than that of the martyrs of the days of Nero or of Diocletian, choosing rather to suffer all the tortures that

Far Eastern ingenuity could invent than to deny the name of Christ. Men and women, old and young, laid down their lives with patient fortitude, and the page of Japanese history that tells the splendid story of these unknown martyrs shines all the brighter for its contrast with the humiliating tale of that self-seeking worldliness of Europeans in which the cause of the persecution is only too certainly to be found. At last, after about thirty years of nameless horrors, the hated religion was stamped out, and with it all intercourse with the West. For Iemitsu, the grandson of Ieyasu, to put an end, as he believed, to all possibility of future troubles arising from foreign intercourse, shut the country wholly up, and withdrew all the privileges and treaties granted by his grandfather to Europeans, forbidding any foreigner to set foot on Japanese soil or any native to leave the country, both on pain of death; so that for the next two centuries both the Christian religion and foreign commerce were at an end for Japan.

And this is the dark shadow which lurks in the solemn groves of Nikko and dims the glory of its golden shrines.



THE FOUR PRIESTESSES OF NIKKO AND ONE OF THE PRIESTS.



IN SHIBA PARK.

CHAPTER VII

TOKYO

HERE I am in Tokyo at last, after all this time in Japan. R—— and I came here by train on Wednesday week, long after dark, owing to the leisurely principle on which railways, like most other things, are managed in this country. Imagine my excitement on approaching this place, full of the romantic associations of the country's past and the centre of the forces which are to mould its future, and with it who knows what besides of the destinies of the Far East and through it of Europe herself. But though there was a moon, it was hidden by heavy clouds, and all one could see as the train drew slowly nearer the terminus was an occasional tall, thin column, showing dimly against the dark clouds that covered the sky: iron factory chimneys, as one knew, for in this country these abominations are usually of that material—villainously ugly things like monster stove-pipes—on account of the danger from earthquakes to

such massive brick erections as those which spread sweetness and light over the industrial regions of our own country. At last we stopped in the long, covered station—rather dark, but otherwise about as attractive as such places are elsewhere, at any rate with the merit of not attempting elaborate ornamentation. Surely there is nothing more ridiculous in a world of ugliness than the attempt to adorn an unbeautiful thing, such as, it would seem, a railway station must inevitably be, by covering it with costly and misplaced ornament. How many preposterous stations does one not know on the Continent, all frescoes and marbles—and dirt? Anyway, whether you admire that style or not, you will not find it here. Ueno Station has absolutely no elegance of any kind. It has a roof to keep off the weather, and that roof is supported by plain wooden posts; there are one or two necessary pens at the end for luggage and tickets, and that is all; and for my part I cannot see what more in the name of common sense is wanted in a railway station. You don't get marble pillars adorned with acanthus capitals in a Japanese railway station—things which nobody wants there—but in the plain wooden shed you get your ticket for almost nothing at all, a thing that everybody wants but does not get in the gorgeous booking halls of Europe. Well, we got out of our train while making these sage reflections, or some of them, and made our way to the luggage place in the midst of the huge crowd of little people—not a soul, one was relieved to see, in foreign clothes—all chattering and clattering along to the exit. There is something to be noticed about a Japanese station besides its commendable lack of ornament, and that is the clattering made by the passengers as they walk, especially if the station be one with a roof. Of course it does not sound at all a proper thing to say about Japan, but that sound always reminds me of what one may hear in Lancashire when the “hands” are pouring into some large station in their clogs. It is not quite the same sound. The wooden props of the “geta,” as their wearers shuffle gently along, sound a little differently from the solid clogs on the feet of these

other youths and damsels whose movements are not gentle, but nevertheless it always reminds me of that far-off barbarous sound.

We got our baggage in the end (though I regret to say there was a good deal of it). You might think it rather a hopeless undertaking to get your luggage at a large Japanese station with hundreds and hundreds of native passengers crowding round—these little folks seem to travel a great deal—when you cannot even read where the luggage office is, and you can't claim it at the train as we do at home, for they adopt the checking system, to which our British civilisation has not yet attained, and very well they work it, too. But they have also an excellent device of official porters, over and above the ordinary baggage coolies, and these are the foreigner's salvation. The distinctive part of their dress consists of nothing more elaborate than a little scarlet cap, but that has at least the merit of being conspicuous. You hand your checks to one of these functionaries, and he gets your luggage and your rickshaws for you, and does not overcharge you for the latter. He could not, in fact, if he would, for there is a printed tariff, and he never realises that though you can speak to him you cannot read a word of it; in any case, whether he would or no, at least he does not, but hands you a check with the amount you are to pay on arrival written legibly on it—in Chinese. The luggage that comes out of a Japanese train is too funny for anything; never a trunk or box among it unless there be foreigners among the passengers, only piles of those oblong wicker baskets fitting one inside the other, which are here called "koris"—or at least I myself speak of them as "koris," regardless of the fact that there is no plural in this language. As the train had been rather full, it was quite a long time before our multitudinous koris were disinterred from beneath the mountain of other people's, but at last, getting them and ourselves into an inordinate number of rickshaws, we set off through the darkness for our hotel, the hotel where we intended to spend the first few days, and which was, we knew, to be one on the foreign plan; a depressing thought,

of course, in itself, yet the natural man rejoiced with a secret and unæsthetic joy over the near prospect of the flesh-pots of Egypt; for after some weeks of it the pure ideal with a nasty taste and no particular substance is apt to pall, even though served in the most charming of lacquered bowls and eaten ever so successfully with chopsticks.

It had begun to rain while we were getting our luggage, and soon the streets were shining rivers of wet mud as we splashed on through what seemed like miles and miles of them, each to all appearance exactly like all the rest. The same low, grey houses that one sees everywhere else, only with a greater proportion of solid walled buildings; the same telegraph posts, the same—exactly the same—shops, no bigger and no more gorgeous than anywhere else; the same mixture of charming paper lanterns and odious kerosene lamps, with here and there the usual sporadic electric light. Of course R——'s rickshaw was as usual whirled out of sight at once, and as I sat in mine and went on through mile after mile of darkness in cheerful confidence that the coolie would not go off with me to some dark alley, there to make an end of me, I tried to realise that this was Yedo, the city of Ieyasu and all the glories of the Shoguns and the multitudinous pomp of Old Japan. But I could not do it in anywise. It is always and everywhere difficult to see the past through the veil of the present; but somehow these familiar-looking little streets, so quiet and orderly, so full of every-day pumpkins and the cuttlefish of domestic consumption, with so many glimpses of family parties in the room behind the shop, taking their evening meal in draughty content round the domestic “hibachi,” seemed to forbid the thought of the days of chivalry, when the samurai in gorgeous attire stalked through the streets with his two swords, and all the people made way before him; when the lord and his train swept along between lines of prostrate commons, and life was on all hands held a cheap possession. No, I could not manage it. There were the tram-lines—I hoped the kurumaya would not slip on them—and there in the little box below the

electric light the doughty samurai, in policeman's uniform, was teaching himself English out of a phrase-book. Clearly danger and romance alike were gone from Yedo, as they are from everywhere else. At last a black space of utter darkness, with here and there a light shining faintly on a long line of water—could it be the old castle moat?—and then suddenly the hotel, with its rows of lighted windows; a huge, pretentious stone building, like any first-class hotel in London or New York. However, unromantic as that may be, it is a remarkably nice hotel, and one was not sorry to relapse for a short time into the ways of the barbarous West. For though nothing will ever persuade me that any bedstead can ever be as comfortable as a Japanese futon—or preferably more than one—laid on elastic tatami, still there is no doubt that after sitting for weeks on one's heels, with nothing to lean back against, it is after all rather nice to sit in an arm-chair with a back, and behold one's long-lost toes in the foreground of the picture. Then again in such a place, after one's barbarian dinner of meat and such horrors, one goes prosaically to bed in a large room, with curtains and carpet and bedstead, without tatami, or futon, or andon, or any of the other things I so delight in, but also, seeing that a well-ordered world has always its compensations, without rats.

I have been here some time now, so I think I may send you a description of the great city. Some Japanese friends have told me that Tokyo is as big as London, so far as area goes. That I suspect to be a distinct exaggeration, but it is very huge nevertheless—you may go miles and miles in a rickshaw and never seem to get any nearer the end of it. It is all very flat, having the bay on one side and the plain on the other; but if you go to one of the few places from which more or less of a bird's-eye view may be obtained, the general effect is not impressive—you see nothing but a monotonous expanse of low, grey roofs, endless streets all of the same small, rather mean-looking houses. A Japanese friend said to me awhile ago that some European had described Tokyo as a "wilderness of huts." That may be going rather

far, but still one can see what that misguided person meant as one goes on indefinitely through street after street of low, grey wooden houses of two storeys high (and these storeys very low ones as a rule), with never the slightest pretence to anything of what we call handsomeness. Of course, there is a reason for this; in a country where earthquakes, sometimes on a grand scale, and fires, also on a scale no less imposing, are of constant occurrence, it is not to be expected that a grandiose style of architecture would develop itself unless the inhabitants were subject to idiocy as well as to earthquakes and conflagrations. One thing, however, which enlivens the all-prevailing grey, and also adds greatly to the size of the city, is the great number of gardens and open spaces within it. There are several large public parks; all palaces and houses of importance stand in large grounds, and every house not of the very poorest has a garden of some sort.

The streets are not broad, neither are they particularly narrow, and as a rule there is no sidewalk; there is, to be sure, little need for one in a town where there are practically no carts or carriages to knock anybody down. As for the state in which the streets are kept, there is from a road-making point of view much to be desired. They are perfectly clean in so far as you never see anything offensive in them, but when it rains—well, you must wait till you see the mud; I will not undertake to describe it. Many people wax very indignant about this, but after all there seems little reason for their wrath. An expensive macadamised or wooden street would do the people themselves no good, and I suppose they make their roads primarily for themselves, not for foreigners, who are so eccentric as to like walking, and who wear boots, which are spoiled by the mud and allow the feet to get wet. All Japanese who can afford it go about in rickshaws; and those who cannot do not mind the mud, for they put on high “geta” to walk in, which raise their feet four or five inches off the ground and keep them perfectly comfortable. So why should they spend their money on macadamising their streets?

As for the ways and means of getting about Tokyo, I have discovered that they are rather more various than in most other places, where you must go about in a rickshaw or not at all. Of course the rickshaw is the universal thing; everybody goes in them everywhere, native or foreigner, that goes without saying. But you can also in Tokyo go in a "basha" if you like. A basha is a carriage of European aspect—usually a shabby-looking landau or victoria—which may be hired. The coachman sits on the box in the inevitable blue cotton clothes and mushroom hat, and drives, and the footman, wearing the same costume, runs in front and yells, though sometimes he jumps up beside the coachman like a monkey and sits beside him for a few minutes to vary the proceedings. But as a rule he is in front, yelling. I do not like a basha myself; one never knows at what moment one may not run over half a dozen people or babies in spite of the yelling, for, like Jehu the son of Nimshi, a Japanese coachman drives furiously, and there seems, moreover, to be no particular rule of the road. Or, again, you may go in a tram, for there are trams here—horse ones. This is, I suppose, rather an undignified way of getting about; but all the same it is distinctly amusing, like second-class railway travelling, because you can see the people there, and you can see how good-natured and polite they are and also how clean. (This latter fact is perceptible by more senses, be it noted, than the eye.) Then you can go about on a bicycle if you have one, and I should think it would be a very good plan, seeing the greatness of the distances. In Yokohama I often used to hire rather awful ones, but somehow here I have never done it, so I cannot speak from experience. There are steamers, too, on the river Sumida, but they are not delightful. You are free, however, to do any one of these things; there is only one thing you may not do, and that is to go anywhere soever on foot, which is really the nicest thing to do, for you can always stop and look at anything that may interest you on the way. It is not forbidden by the police certainly, but if you attempt it you are followed everywhere you go by a

perfect train of men with rickshaws, all croaking "'ksha, 'ksha" unceasingly, for all the world like frogs in a marsh. You cannot look at anything or go anywhere without them—it is the greatest nuisance in the world. They cannot understand that any one should want to walk for pleasure's sake, let alone a foreigner, who, of course, is made of money; they think you *must* be wanting a rickshaw, and that if they only shout long enough and loud enough your stupid foreign mind will at last take in the fact that it is there for you to have. No, walking is not a bit of good; your only chance if you want a walk is to take a rickshaw and let it follow you, but even then you cannot really enjoy yourself, for the humiliating consciousness that the man is staring at your every movement with all his eyes, looking over your shoulder, or rather perhaps I should say under your elbow, whenever you stop to see anything and wondering all the time what particular lunatic asylum you hail from. If you go very far from the centre of the town you can get to where rickshaws are comparatively few, but then the chances are that you will lose yourself, and be reduced to taking one in order to get home. I did that the other day—took a rickshaw to a far-away temple, and sending the man off, to his great surprise, started, as I hoped, for a journey of exploration on foot. I was not much—in fact not at all—bothered by rickshaw men, but I got hopelessly lost. It is very hopeless to get lost in Tokyo, for all the streets bear a strong family likeness to one another, and though (very likely) all the names are written up, that conveys nothing to my mind. I asked my way several times, but it is one thing to ask and another to get an answer; you get a number of questions about yourself instead. This is the sort of thing that happens: "Condescend to tell me the way to" (say) "Kudan." "Kudan is it augustly? Ah, is that so? Do you come from England or America?" "I come from England. Condescend to tell me . . ." (as before). "Is that so? I should like to see England. How long have you been in Japan?" "Such or such a time. Condescend. . . ." "Is that so? How old are you?" "Such an age.

Condescend. . . ." "Ah, is that so? How do you like Japan?" "It is very beautiful. Condescend. . . ." "Have you any brothers and sisters?" So you may go on indefinitely till your friend's curiosity is satisfied, and then when you do get the answer, if you ever do, the chances are that you will be none the wiser, for they have no idea of putting anything in a direct way at any time, and the answer is likely to be as complicated as the road it describes. So on this occasion at least I gave it up and went back ignominiously in a rickshaw.

Whether you go in a rickshaw or not, however, you will notice that the streets of this town are to all appearance perfectly endless and that they are for the most part very much alike. Each house has a shop on the ground floor, entirely open to the street, of course, and with nothing in the shape of a window; the wares arranged on the floor or hanging from the roof, or otherwise disposed according to their nature, which is sometimes not a little obscure. If you want to do any purchasing you sit on the edge of the shop, as it were, with your feet in the street, unless your business is so serious as to take you right in, then you sit on your heels among the stock. They are generally women whom you see in the shops, for the Japanese woman of the lower class is a very practical person, not at all like the ladies of the aristocracy, who, with some few exceptions, seem to be chiefly for ornament. The tradesman's wife as a rule "runs" the whole business of the shop while he works at something else. Their hours of work seem to go on for ever, and there are apparently no days when the shops are shut; certainly one sees them open on various national holidays. Whether they ever do have a regular holiday or not I do not know. I wonder what our shop assistants would think of the Japanese plan. On the other hand, of course the word "shop" in Tokyo hardly means what it does in London—a place where great numbers of people work for hire at enormous distances from their homes. The shop is the home as a rule—simply the front room of the house—and if there is an assistant he is as often as not adopted as a son. So that

the hardship of keeping open so long is not so great as one would think at first sight.

Such queer little shops they are too. The owners do not put their names above the windows or on them, or below them, because they have no windows at all. They hang them out on long narrow boards, or more often strips of cloth adorned with huge Chinese characters, as often as not white on a blue ground, which, I suppose, convey to the initiated the name and occupation of the tradesman and, it may be, also information as to the superior quality of his wares. At night paper lanterns inscribed in the same way answer the like purpose; it would seem. Quite half the shops, I do believe, are greengrocers' and fruiterers', and very odd their fruit and their vegetables are. Just now, as it is autumn, one sees pumpkins and squashes of all sorts in great profusion, as well as the inevitable "daikon," a very unpleasant thing like a giant radish or turnip, or something of that sort, which I believe the Japanese think very nice. The taste for it must require a good deal of cultivation, I should think. Then there are all sorts of withered-looking things hanging in strings, and just now great heaps of persimmons, whose shining gold does much to light up the all-prevailing greyness of the streets. Amongst other recognisable things are grapes and apples, the former very like those one generally gets in America, the latter bad. (There are very good apples to be had in Japan, but apparently only in the north.) Oranges too are just beginning to come in, but they are no rivals in size or colour of the beautiful persimmons. Next to the vegetable shops in number I think must surely be the drapers'. You never see any ready-made clothes shops—at least I have never noticed any as yet; but in a country where they habitually unpick their clothes to wash them perhaps this is not very surprising. No, you see the stuffs, all the same width (a very narrow one—I should say about thirteen or fourteen inches), never more or less, in neat little flat rolls with paper round them, lying about all over the floor, beneath festoons of the same sort of materials hanging from the roof. Dark blue and plum-

coloured, and grey stuffs with a tiny stripe in them, for the most part—these for the elderly folks—soft, dove colours, and greens and silvery greys for the younger, and all the colours of the rainbow in every kind of rampant pattern for the children. For you carry your age on your back in Japan, and the more years you can lay claim to the greater the pride of your heart and the darker the colours of your costume. There seem to be no sundries of any sort sold in a Japanese draper's; the wholeshopisone "department," to wit "dress materials." However, the national dress does not call for very much in this way; it has no trimmings and no fastenings; the only thing of the kind being the silk cord which fastens the "haori" across the chest. (The haori is a sort of coat worn very commonly by both men and women of the better classes.)

Then you have the fish shops; not too appetising to behold, and containing all manner of fish, dressed in a variety of unalluring ways and ready to be cooked, amongst them cuttlefish and other horrors great and small. Not that there is anything dirty about them; they are all beautifully clean, but—"non raggioniam' di lor', ma guarda e passa." Bakers' shops too—at least I call them bakers' shops, but seeing that bread is non-existent here, perhaps the name is not quite happy. Cakes innumerable there are, however, all of rice-flour and bean paste, and coloured like the rainbow, flowers and leaves and all sorts of conventional devices whose hues of violent red or green are discouraging, but which one may eat with perfect impunity nevertheless. Biscuits also of Japanese manufacture in imitation of the European style—not bad, some of them—are often to be got in these shops. Then there are the shops where they make and sell "tofu." Tofu is a white, squashy stuff, made of bean curd, I believe, and looking like blancmange cut into rectangular slabs. The Japanese seem very fond of it. I think it is perfectly horrid, but it is always beautifully clean, and the way they carry it about in wooden boxes and sell it on the street without ever messing or dirtying it is really wonderful.

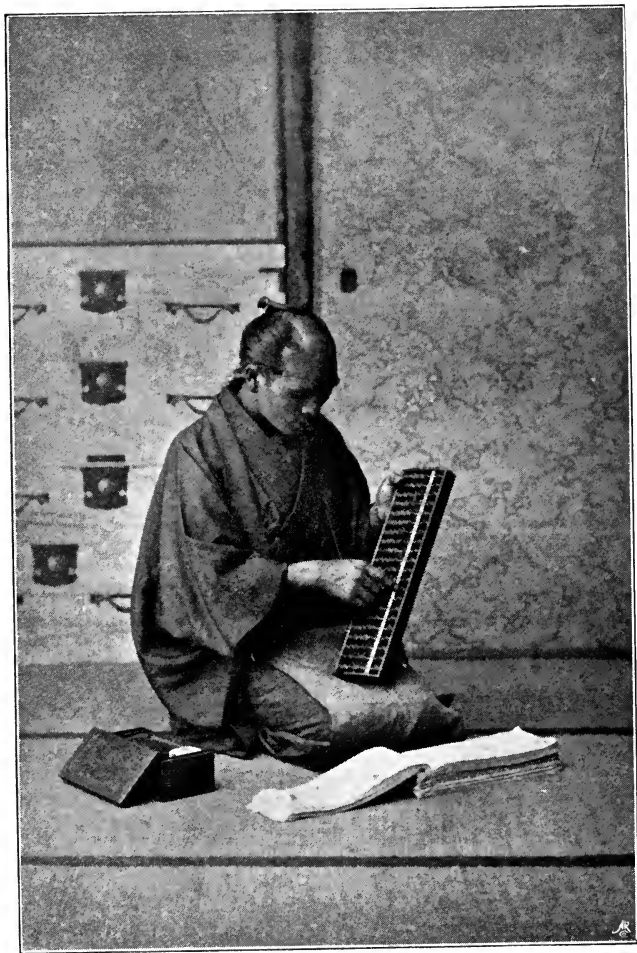
Then there are the hardware shops, full of horrible kerosene lamps and tin canisters and metal objects of different kinds which are not very alluring because, with the exception of the kettles, which are charming as a rule, they don't look "Japanesey" at all; that is to say, they have the air of being Japanese imitations of German articles—in lowest deeps a lower depth. Then there are the shops that sell what I think they would call "fancy goods" at home. Hairdressing requisites, combs black, white, and especially pink, switches of false hair, pads and glaring ornamental pins to adorn the head withal, purses, tobacco-pouches and pipes—the funny little pipes of the country—Japanese stationery, thin and highly coloured, and all sorts of sundries besides. These shops are rather attractive too, in so far as they are native, but alas! many of the things in the more ambitious ones have that familiar stamp that speaks the Fatherland. One gets consolation in the china shops, however; these are wholly native, and though they do not sell the "magnificent old Satsuma" which people at home seem to think is everywhere to be had in Japan, they do sell very fascinating things in the way of humble objects of domestic utility and costing a few sen. Plates, as a rule not very pretty, in smudgy patterns of purplish blue (these one can easily resist), dear little teapots and cups in the handleless style one knows and loves, all done up in sets of five, the covered bowls used in native meals, pots for flowers and pots for fire, these are quite another affair. To-day I went to buy a teapot, not for ornament but for use, for living so much among native surroundings has developed in me a pernicious habit of drinking a tumblerful of tea at all hours. "Honourable teapot exists there augustly?" one asks, sitting on the shop-window. "Condescend to let us see some." "Hei, deign to glance at these." Of course to-day I saw a lot of teapots, all of which the good lady told me were "honourably cheap." But as time is no object in this country and bargaining a recognised and favourite form of amusement, I went on for some time, the rickshaw man assisting as usual with great interest, till at last we

arrived at mutual satisfaction. I cannot myself read any Chinese characters to any literary purpose, but have acquired the art of reading numerals and prices, which is no little help towards concluding a bargain, for things are often marked with a price. To-day my teapot cost finally, with cups and all, eighty-five sen, or something like one and ninepence. There are a hundred sen in a yen, so one would imagine the change for that coin might easily be arrived at even by a person who, like myself, can never add two and two together with any confidence in the result. But this shopwoman, like every other shopwoman, or man either, proceeded gravely to reckon up the amount on her "soroban" before she felt able to give me my change. Nobody here ever thinks of reckoning anything without a soroban. It is an abacus—a square frame, namely, with wires running across it and beads on the wires. It has an upper and a lower division, wherein the beads represent, I believe, units and tens respectively. I have not, however, mastered the soroban, and have no great hope of ever doing so, for if one has never been able to acquire the comparatively simple art of counting without it, the prospect of doing so with it seems rather a remote one. They say the soroban is really a very scientific instrument, and that cube roots can be extracted by its help. But a kind Providence has ordered that cube roots should not be necessities of every-day life (and even if they unfortunately were, a pencil and a piece of paper seems a simpler plan); and it really is rather odd when you ask a grown-up man in a railway booking-office (dressed in full European clothes and extremely haughty as well) for two tickets at a dollar each, to have to wait till he has subtracted two from five on the soroban before you can get your change for a five-dollar bill. It is very neat to look at him as he sweeps his hand gracefully over the instrument and clicks the little beads with his finger and thumb, but as an arithmetical process one feels it lacks simplicity.

Then there is the Ginza—the main street, in a sense, of Tokyo; very up to date and half European, with a tram-line down the middle. Some of the shops have plate-

glass fronts and windows dressed in such splendid foreign style that you might think you were in Whitechapel itself, so elegant are the wares displayed, especially in the way of tailoring. Ah, what hats and gloves and ties! No wonder these splendid creatures who sometimes dazzle our eyes with the glories of foreign clothes look like—what they look like. And what clocks and jewellery in other shops also glorious in plate-glass and a hinged door! Where *can* they have come from, I wonder? But the shops which are my especial joy are not as a rule in the Ginza. They are the shops which sell the colour prints at which I love to stand and gaze. They are not the fine old colour prints which you see at home in exhibitions of Japanese art; they are horrid crude things in glaring colours and printed anyhow—altogether indefensible as works of art. But the subjects fascinate me for all that; they are taken from the stage or from stories or legends of Old Japan. Grand lords and ladies with marvellous long, pale faces, the gentlemen with their eyebrows sloping up and the corners of their mouths sloping down, the ladies with eyebrows just under their hair and no other features to speak of, but such gorgeous robes and such heroic situations that I spend hours gazing at them and even occasionally fifty sen on buying them, in spite of the protests of the æsthetically minded. You get a great many for fifty sen—ten sets of three which you must set side by side, and the grand excitement is first to find out what the picture is about, and secondly which is the middle piece.

Of course there are streets without shops in Tokyo as much as anywhere else—miles and miles of them, for the population is large and they do not live piled on top of each other as we and the Americans do. Each family has its own little house as a rule, or its own part of what was once a big house—that is, a “long house,” for no house in this country is ever high (except the few and melancholy remains of ancient castles). This is what gives that air of meanness people complain of in Tokyo, this and the fact of the houses being built of wood, which soon gets to look the worse for wear and weather. The streets



A CALCULATION ON THE SOROBAN.

of dwelling-houses look very different from the shop streets, for they never face towards the road. They all stand a little back, even if only a foot or two in the case of humbler dwellings, behind a fence with a gate of more or less conspicuous structure according to the class of house, but all, rich and poor alike, are perfectly private and retired. All the best rooms are to the back, facing the garden if there be one (as there always is in a house of anything like a good class), and the house turns a blank, expressionless look towards the street so far as it can be seen at all behind its high wooden fence. But there are houses, whatever people may say about huts, which are both dignified and pretty ; you may go through whole districts of them ; large enough houses with heavy curving roofs, standing each in its own grounds, and often very charming grounds they are. Some of these—very many indeed—are old ecclesiastical buildings, temples or buildings connected with temples and dating from the palmy days of Buddhism before the Revolution, now sunk to secular uses and used as dwelling-houses by the well-to-do of the capital, and most fascinating dwelling-houses they are. No, it is rather nonsense on the whole to say that Tokyo is all “huts” ; there are miles of houses small and low and grey no doubt, but to call things so dainty and clean and pretty “huts” does certainly call up a false picture before the mind. I wonder what the Japanese think London a wilderness of. How would those miles and miles of monotonous squalor that we call “the East End” appear to one of the dwellers in this wilderness of dainty self-respecting “huts” ?

But do not, pray, imagine on my authority that all Tokyo is dainty or small or wooden or even Japanese at all. Let me not be supposed to suggest anything so dreadful. Is there not in the very centre of the city a whole district of huge brick buildings, witnesses to the glorious fact that Japan is one of the Powers of the earth ? Government offices in every sort of alien style you can imagine. Somebody said once that this sort of thing, known here as “the foreign style” is so called

because it is foreign to all styles of architecture, and the remark is none the less a sound one for being perpetually quoted. There is a Ministry of this, and a Ministry of that—Foreign Affairs, Finance, Marine, War, Courts of Cassation, and everything else all complete, all highly European and French sounding, all housed in buildings which are certainly “foreign” and certainly large; and what more should the heart of patriotism long for? Then, in the same neighbourhood is a whole region of large foreign houses with large grounds; some are the Legations of the European powers, others are the mansions of some of the more up-to-date of the Japanese aristocracy, many of them ex-daimyos of ancient lineage and once of high-sounding name, now known as Viscount This or Marquis That—names suggestive of a brand new and wholly imitation nobility rather than the actual fact, which in many cases is quite otherwise. Some of these marquises and counts and viscounts are of course really quite new—made by their own abilities and the Revolution—and in their case, no doubt, such titles are appropriate enough. But it does give one rather a shock to see Marquis Somebody, the representative of some ancient house famed in history for its deeds of heroism and picturesque blood-thirstiness—to see such an one, attired in an ill-fitting black coat and impossible top-hat, drive quietly up to his mansion in this quarter (which mansion looks as though it might be the Brixton residence of some rich London tradesman), when you know he is really the Lord of some place of musical and famous name—“So and So, Somewhere-or-Other-no-Kami”—and that he ought to be carried to his palace in a crested “norimon” between rows of kneeling retainers. However, if his lordship himself prefers it, it is no affair of ours. I often wonder how far he really does prefer it, but one may go on wondering as much as one likes on this subject for neither he nor any other will ever tell one. There is one thing at least that no one will ever find out about a Japanese, high or low, and that is what he really thinks on any subject in heaven above or the earth beneath—

least of all on subjects connected with the change in the government of his country and all that has come in its train. If you have the bad taste to question him, all you will get in reply is, "I think it is very good for my country." For you cannot learn too soon when you come here that a Japanese loves asking questions, but sees no point at all in answering them. His courteous and dignified reserve when asked a question about his country, answering politely without giving any information, is only to be equalled by the excessive eagerness he displays to ask you questions about yours. If you are a new-comer you will probably think this desire for learning is prompted by respectful admiration for your national institutions. Not in the least; he is merely turning you inside out with a view to seeing how far your evidence may be used along with that of others, to show to what extent the conditions which prevail in your country might be advantageously imported into his own, or otherwise used to further its interests. For my own part I do not see why he should be blamed for this, though I observe that it makes many foreigners furious.

To-day I have been exploring the castle moat; tracing it through its rather complicated windings and trying to bring up a picture of the Yedo of the past before my eyes, but it is not easily done, though I have just been reading a very learned article on the subject, telling how the old Castle of the Shoguns stood within a great enceinte entered by fifty gates and was surrounded by a perfect city of guard-houses and dwellings of nobles and retainers, and enclosed by a complicated system of moats. In the midst, it would seem, stood the great castle itself, and round it, within the circle of the innermost moat, the mansions of the greatest daimyos; within the second moat dwelt the lesser stars of daimyo rank; outside them came the "hatamoto" and others of lower, but still noble degree, these and the armed retainers living in regular streets of long, low, barrack-like dwellings. These were called "nagaya"—"long houses," and some of them are still to be seen to-day, though they are beyond what is now the

outer moat, for the castle precincts are woefully shrunk, and, indeed, even within the moat which now remains you may find on crossing a bridge that you only get into a region of poor dwellings and mean little shops. But still the moat itself is to be seen, a thing of beauty, and I suppose but little changed, unless it be that the gnarled and twisted pines which hang over its massive walls are more weather-beaten than of old, and cast a more fantastic reflection on the still water beneath. The gates in the moat walls, or some of them, remain also and



ON THE CASTLE MOAT.

the bridges leading to them. These gates and bridges are the joy of my heart; they at least, if nothing else does, take one back to the old days at once; and besides, they are charming in themselves nearly all—Sakurada mon, Kiku mon, Wadakura mon (“mon” means “gate”), and others whose names I do not even know. You have the still water and the great sloping wall of cyclopean masonry behind, a light, gracefully elliptical bridge of wood springing from the opposite bank to the gateway, beside it perhaps on either hand white buildings of the

ancient style, lonely survivors of the old regime, once guard-houses or retainers' quarters, long and low for the most part, but here and there rising in turrets three stories high, each story with its dark curving roof and its dragons crowning the crested gable ends. And the water below is generally so still that bridge and turret and black twisted pine are all doubled in it as in a mirror. There you have a bit of the old among the new, and, if one may respectfully say so, the new does not shine by comparison, from an æsthetic point of view at least. The present Imperial palace now stands in the innermost part. It is not really the old castle, which was burnt down even before the Revolution in the troubles which preceded it, but it stands on the original site, and is, I believe, about a dozen years old.

It is not shown to ordinary mortals, or to any one indeed who is not going to have an audience of the Emperor, and as I am only an ordinary mortal, of course I have not seen it. But I understand the inside is not altogether beautiful; the guide book (whose description is very prudently taken from a Japanese newspaper) gives some particulars for our delectation; amongst other things we learn that the furniture was imported from Germany, and that the shoji are of plate glass, which arrangement gives the impression of an "endless vista of crystal chambers." This sounds rather uninspiring, but I hear from other sources that there is much that is quite Japanese and beautiful side by side with these horrors, and one may hope that the German furniture will soon wear out and the "endless vista" get broken, so that all may yet be well. The outside is said to be in the native style; and indeed one can catch occasional glimpses of graceful brown roofs among the trees. There is one entrance gate which the Emperor seems to use—at least, any time we have seen him go in or out it has been by this one—which strikes me as very typical of present-day Japan. A brand new stone bridge, with extremely elaborate electric light standards, spans the moat, and the gate beyond leads into the Imperial precincts between quaint many-roofed towers of the old regime. It is not

unusual to see the new and the old thus standing together, yet this seems to me a typical example; the new solid, strong, utilitarian, the earnest of a future of material progress, the old graceful, picturesque, full of charming suggestion, but useless and of no practical account—a pathetic survival of a day that is done.

It is this contrast, so continually before the eyes, that is perhaps the chief fascination of Tokyo. In other places you can see more real picturesqueness and fewer results of European influence; you can enjoy more of what, to me at least, is the real charm of life in Japan apart from the outward beauty of the country—the charm of living to some extent in a world which has passed away. You may associate with people who have actually lived under the conditions which were those of our ancestors five hundred years ago; in the midst, that is, of the feudal system—many of these people not so very old either—and in some degree you may see the outward daily life of that period going on around you still. The husbandman, I take it, now that he pays his taxes to the Constitutional Government, looks as he works in his rice-field not otherwise than he looked when he worked in the same field for the rice with which he paid his tribute to his feudal lord; he is an older man now, and he has cut off his queue, that is all, and you may see him any day as you might have seen his ancestors any day for centuries untold if you had visited Japan in the course of some former incarnation. But here in Tokyo it is otherwise. The dress of the people is not, indeed, conspicuously different, their manners among themselves are much what they were, their humble tasks and the wares in which they traffic are not so greatly changed as to make any very great difference in the effect of the street to the eye, nor does it seem as though the inner life and ideas of the folk who live in it are really very different either. But keep in the middle of the town and you will see something quite unlike anything that Old Japan ever knew or dreamed of. There the electric light, the telegraph and telephone, are quite at home, a tram-line connects the two great railway

termini, and every third building is a bank or a newspaper office—here the new visibly jostles the old. You can see a vivid picture of the transition process itself in that great empty space outside the moat which shuts off the Imperial precincts ; that blank dismal region whence the daimyo's yashikis have vanished, and over which the abomination of desolation reigns by day, and by night a darkness which may be felt, pending the time when the big brick buildings of the new era shall have spread over it and covered the nakedness of the land. The old is gone, wholly and utterly, and the new has not yet quite come to take its place ; meanwhile a void is left, unsightly, melancholy, answering, it may be, to an unacknowledged blank in the nation's heart where dignified reserve and smiling acquiescence veil the scars left by the tearing down of the old and native to make room for the coming of the foreign and the new. Well, the new is all quite right, of course, and no well-wisher of this charming country could regret it on the whole. For the meaning of the new is that instead of being a wholly negligible though interesting and mysterious curiosity at the ends of the earth, Japan is one of the " Powers," and to be reckoned with at every turn. Only one may, perhaps, be allowed sometimes to wish that the change might have been worked in a slightly different manner, one which should have effected the same progress and yet have been attended with less individual hardship and less dislocation between the old and the new, and made, perhaps, a more judicious selection of the novelties to be introduced. However, it is too late to think of that now, and one can but admire the patriotism and self-sacrifice of most of the parties concerned in the change and the extraordinary energy and versatility of a nation which could do in a single generation what Japan has done.

I wrote to you from Nikko something about the great Ieyasu. It was he who made a great city of this place. Before his time Yedo was only a group of fishing hamlets with a small castle in their midst and surrounded by a swamp, but when he moved his headquarters hither the quiet seaside village began to change into the mighty

city. Probably the Yedo of his time had this in common with the Tokyo of to-day, that it was a place where the carpenter and stone mason were much in evidence, and where there was much digging and levelling and altering, full too, perhaps, of unsightly open spaces, standing then as it does now at the beginning of a new era. The castle was finished very soon, but it was the later rule forcing the daimyos to make it their residence for half the



PRESENT-DAY SOLDIERS IN AN OLD-WORLD TOWN (SENDAI).

year which turned the military stronghold into the place of splendour it afterwards became.

Think of the stately life that was lived in these dainty varnished palaces; their exquisite decorations, the gorgeousness of their inmates, retainers in embroidered dresses of ceremony, ladies in trailing brocades. Idle lives enough, I doubt not, these noble lords and ladies lived through all their gorgeous days, quite devoid of all activity or purpose, filled out with futile amusements and that enormous etiquette which surrounded the simplest action with a bristling hedge of ceremonial observances and produced that deferential habit of mind and body which sprang,

be it observed, not from snobbishness, but from the national ideal of duty. For snobbishness was unknown in Old Japan (and indeed, so far as I have seen, it is distinctly uncommon now); nobody ever thought of trying to appear of more consequence than he or she really was, for everybody knew exactly who was who, and nothing could alter the patent fact, so every one in his degree showed respect to those of rank above his own as a matter of course and as in duty bound, and expected it in his turn from those beneath him, and life went smoothly on with smiles and bows and courtly phrases.

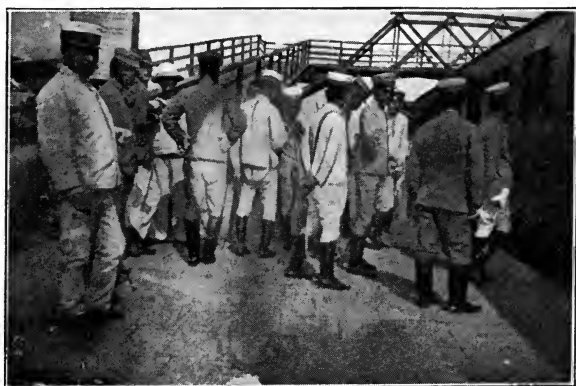
Yet to judge by the tales which have come down from these picturesque days and the plays one sees in the theatres (for the theatre is the place wherein to study the life of olden times) the inner life of these well-ordered households, so dainty in their exquisite ceremoniousness, so imperturbable in their dignified aloofness, was yet not quite so placid and so unemotional as their decorous exterior might have led one to suppose could one have seen it. On the contrary, they seem to have been the abode of intrigue and violence unparalleled, though all in such a charmingly polite and picturesque fashion that one cannot help liking them all the better for it. Plotting and scheming seem to have been the one business of life. But no vulgar broil ever resulted; the unsuccessful party whether schemer or schemed against, knight or lady, would retire with graceful dignity and self-possession from the scene, cutting all embarrassing knots with the dirk that stuck so conveniently in the brocaded girdle, without any disturbance or bringing of disgrace upon the lord.

Besides the tragedies that had their origin in ambition or in spite, there were others which sprang from a more dramatic motive, namely, revenge. The vendetta was one of the most recognised and respected institutions of feudal days, and it had its roots in the very heart of the nation. To avenge the death of a parent or kinsman or feudal lord was not only permissible, but the most sacred of obligations in the eyes of every man, woman, or child not wholly dead to honour or duty or self-respect. To weigh one's own life or that of one's nearest and dearest

in the balance against a just vengeance were a foul dishonour no true samurai could so much as think of. Those whom death overtook before their vengeance was accomplished would bequeath it to their children. Women were bound to vengeance no less than men, and many are the popular tales of the glorious deeds of the heroine who meets death with delight in avenging parent or master or mistress, and of children who give up everything in life to the fulfilment of this sacred duty, wandering perhaps for years in beggary before the success of their endeavours crowns their miserable life with a violent death. But the legal vendetta and all its picturesque unpleasantness has gone the way of the queue and the two swords; it was forbidden soon after the Revolution as behind the times, and you now bring an action against your adversary prosaically in the law courts. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this same spirit is by no means quenched in these latter days, in spite of social conditions so greatly changed. The flame of loyalty burns no less brightly in the hearts of the present generation than it did in those of their more picturesque forefathers, only a passionate devotion to the one Emperor has taken the place of the narrower allegiances of feudal days. The legal vendetta, the inherited feud of family or clan, has given way to an intense, almost personal hatred of real or supposed national adversaries, and the same reckless devotion which could spurn alike the joys of life and the fear of death in pursuit of a dutiful vengeance may now be seen in the burning desire which seems to possess every man, woman, and child to suffer death or bereavement for their country's sake. And in this fact seems to me to lie the best hope for the future of a nation old, no doubt, in years, but young in experience and temper, carried away by every new idea, and much a prey to party spirit in the enthusiasm of its new-found political life. So long as the national ship sails through smooth waters it seems likely that there will be, not mutiny certainly, but much quarrelling on board, and perhaps in the future, some uncertainty in the steering.

But the first sign of danger will put an end to all this, and however much may be prophesied to the contrary I cannot but feel sure that so long as this ancestral fire—"Yamato damashi"—endures, the island empire is perfectly safe, and her future as a nation is assured. Everything goes to show that the descendants of those who went so cheerfully to death for loyalty's sake of old will sink all political rivalries in the presence of a foe without, or of economic difficulties within.

But to go back to the changes which have made old Yedo into new Tokyo. All the world's a stage, and



GROUP OF JAPANESE OFFICERS.

Japan no less than the rest of the planet. In 1868 the curtain in this particular theatre fell, and rose at once upon the new act that is now going on. A space of three hundred years is supposed to have elapsed—that is all: rather an unusual interval perhaps, seeing that the *dramatis personæ* remain practically the same, though the names of their parts have mostly been changed. The picturesque figures so conspicuous in the last act as Shogun, Daimyo, and Samurai are no longer seen; their rôles are those of the Prime Minister, the Viscount Somebody, and the Policeman respectively, but many of the performers remain the same. The actor who once played the leading part is no longer on the stage, but he

is still in the theatre—a princely spectator in a private box. He lives in Tokyo in strict retirement, a fine example of patriotic self-effacement, living the life of a private person and devoting himself to literary and artistic pursuits. He is said to be greatly interested in the spread of Western improvements among his countrymen, and certainly, to my own knowledge, this last to sit in the seat of Ieyasu is, amongst his other accomplishments, a first-rate amateur photographer. As for the daimyos, they are still in evidence under their new names and titles; they and the old court nobles of Kyoto are all mixed up now as “noblemen.” Some of them sit in the House of Peers and discuss and vote on railway and drainage bills—no, I fancy *not* drainage, for that “augustly exists not,” but other no less prosaic subjects—forgetful to all appearance of that gorgeous time three hundred years ago in which their youth was spent.

The samurai, moreover, are by no means things of the past; on the contrary, they, or some of them, are more to the front than ever. Under the old regime, indeed, they had in fact, if not in name, played the leading part in the affairs of the provinces of their several lords, who had, as a rule, become degenerate through the habits of luxury and effeminacy acquired in long centuries of peace. So in the commotions of 1868 the daimyos, as a class, weighed down by their own incapacity, sank to the bottom so far as participation in public affairs was concerned, and the most able of their samurai retainers, seizing on their opportunity, rose to the top, and have remained there ever since. Most of the prominent figures of modern Japan are men who began life as samurai not of the highest grade, though now they are noblemen like their former lords, the daimyos. This, however, was not, of course, the case with all. The same Revolution which raised those who had ability and opportunity sank others, and these far the greater number, to the lowest depths of misery. This large class, who from time immemorial had never done anything for themselves, who hardly even knew the value of money, supported as they had always been by the feudal lord in

whose service they lived, were suddenly turned adrift to sink or swim as best they could ; the board and lodging they had hitherto received from their daimyos commuted for a certain sum in Government bonds, of which they hardly knew the use, and which in nine cases out of ten slipped quickly through their unaccustomed fingers, leaving them in the direst straits. Accordingly, some took to the hitherto despised pursuit of commerce, and made the failure in it that might have been expected ; some opened curio shops with their cherished family treasures for merchandise, where the sword which had been the " living soul " of the owner, more precious than life itself, was sold perhaps for a dollar or two ; others went into domestic service, even with the hated foreigner at the treaty ports. These people never tell you of their past, or speak of themselves at all in fact ; their faces wear always the same impenetrable smile. But all the same, the fact is there, and it seems, to me at least, a depressing one. I have spoken with several people, men and women, brought down by the political change from the high estate of the feudal samurai to very humble positions indeed, but I never heard a word of grumbling on the subject—nothing but exultation over the progress of the country and her rapid advance among the nations. The same spirit which forty years ago would have made him cheerfully slay himself for his feudal superiors now lifts the samurai above all thought of himself and his own reverses. His country is the gainer ; what do his private fortunes matter ? I came across a certain elderly gentleman not so long ago who is a case in point. At the time of the Revolution he had just succeeded to the honours of his father, one of the " hatamoto " (a rank of nobility below that of daimyo, but a high enough position for all that). He lost everything, like most of his fellows, and not being, I suppose, a person of particular ability, he now has to content himself with a by no means dignified post in connection with a Government dockyard. Does this gentleman complain or mope, or give himself airs of having seen better days ? Is he soured, or has he taken to drink ? Not any one of these

things. His manner is grave certainly, but this is not from discontent; it is a part of his inheritance which circumstances cannot take from him—a noble samurai did not giggle like a tea-house girl—but his smile is full of charm as he speaks, and there is no sign of a rankling grievance in his face. He works for his humble living, and stands quietly aside, watching with pride and joy the new edifice rising on the ruins of his fortunes and of those of such as he. Again, there is my friend Mr. O——. He is well off now, for he went to America while still quite young, and learnt foreign business ways there, so that he has been able to make money, and is not exactly one of the tragedies; yet still I think he has not forgotten the ancient honours of his house (he is a younger son of a nobleman ruined on the Tokugawa side). Speaking of the time when the Shogun refused to raise the standard of civil war, and cursed those of his followers who did, “My father slit his belly,” said he (lapsing sadly from his American training in the choice of words). “Yes, but it is very good for my country.” A very large number of the samurai class are now nothing more or less than policemen, shocking though it may sound. It is not quite so dreadful, however, in fact as in name, for not only are many samurai policemen, but most policemen, I believe, are samurai; hence the position of “the force” in Japan is different from what it is with us, as its members are understood to be gentlemen by birth. And in many cases there is no mistaking the fact that they are so when one comes in contact with them. So dignified and courteous are they that one forgets the dreadful German-looking uniform which makes their low stature and stooping carriage so painfully conspicuous. But there are others who have introduced altogether too many modern improvements, and for the ceremonious haughtiness of his grandfather the up-to-date “junsa” occasionally substitutes an absolute lack of all manners whatsoever, trying, apparently, to match his German uniform with a thoroughly German insolence, and doing so with a success that does not always attend on Japanese imitations of things European. Irritating

as he is, however, and furiously angry as he has sometimes made me, I fancy in moments of cool reflection that he really means well. His awful manners are probably not meant to be offensive ; he simply concludes from much that he has seen that that is how foreigners behave, and his great ambition is to seem like a foreigner. And is not imitation the sincerest flattery after all? You must remember that as often as not he gets models to copy which are not specimens of the highest refinement either of Europe or America. The impossible behaviour of many tourists is a thing you have to see before you can believe it, and it is not the poor little policeman's fault if he is unable to discriminate. It is all "foreign manners" in his eyes—execrable he no doubt thinks them in his heart, but then the thing is to be European at all costs—so the result is that he is, quite unconsciously I daresay, most intolerable in his manner towards the next foreigner he comes across, probably congratulating himself the while on his improvement in "the foreign style." After all, it is not easy to be civil in a language of which you hardly know a word, and most of these people insist on airing their smattering of English, if they have one, whether the foreigner's Japanese be better than their English or not. Can anything be more offensive than the way a German waiter or hotel servant often speaks English? And yet he does not wish to be rude ; on the contrary, his eye is steadfastly fixed upon a tip. However, these things are, after all, of only occasional occurrence. As a rule the Japanese policeman is what he is supposed to be—a thorough little gentleman—but he appears to most advantage when he confines himself to his native tongue, and does not launch forth on the unknown sea of English. There seems to be an official phrase-book in Japanese and English, which they are always studying in their little glass boxes. One day I went into the "keisatsusho" of a country town (that is to say, the police office, but somehow the word "police office" calls up an absurdly different idea) to ask for some information. The diminutive chief was most polite, and struggled convulsively into a pair of leather boots the

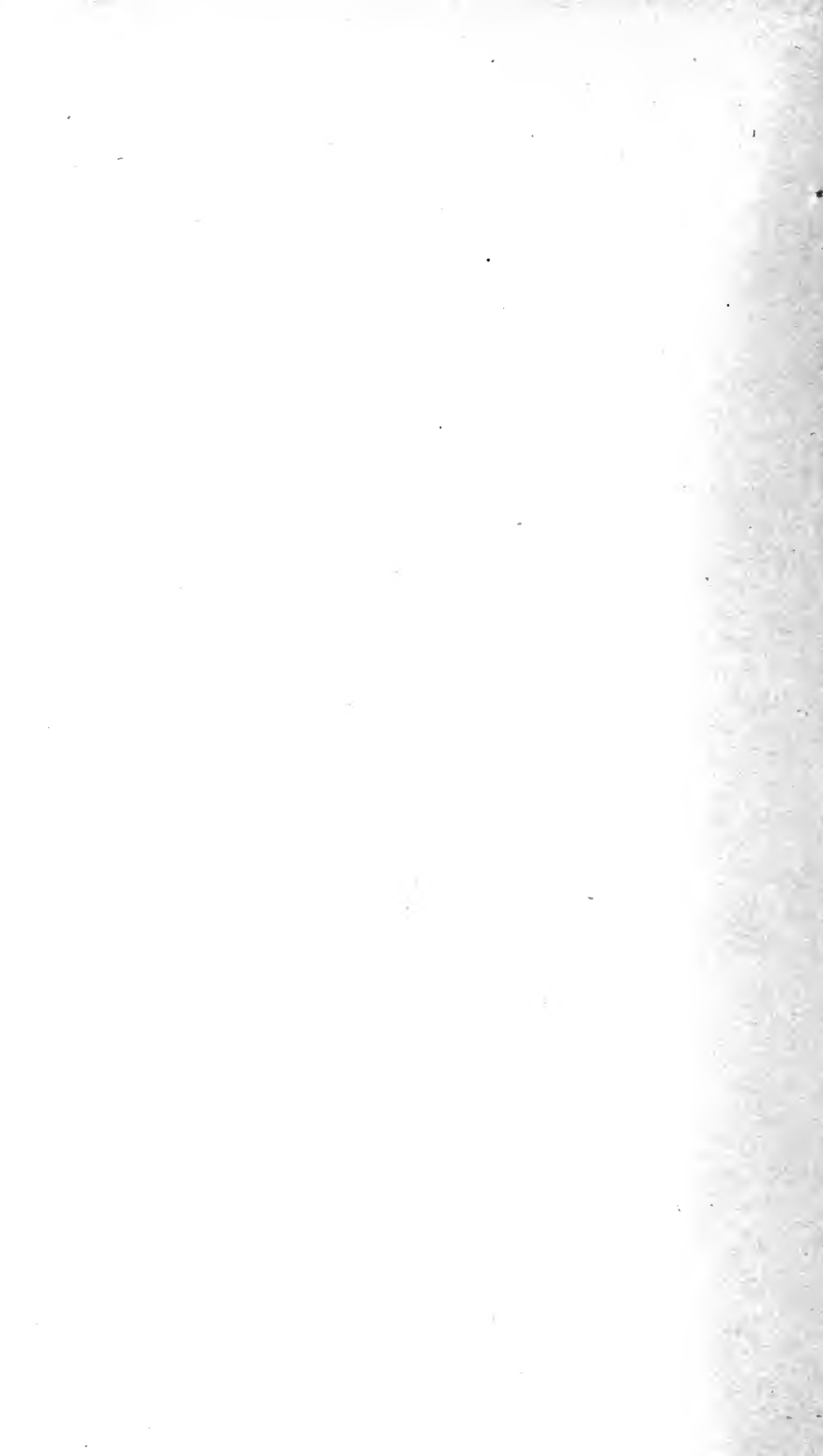
moment he saw me. Before I could open my mouth he said, with immense fluency, "Good morning. I shall be very happy if I can be of any service to you. Do you speak English?" I said I did, whereupon he answered, "Then I shall send for my interpreter." I said at once that as he himself spoke so well an interpreter was quite unnecessary, but it turned out that he had exhausted the whole of his English. These were obviously the first two phrases out of some dialogue headed "With a Foreigner" he had been learning by heart.

Then of course the samurai is still also what he was before—a soldier. Only he is not the only soldier, for members of all the other classes into which feudal Japan was divided are in the army now; and a better army surely there is not on the face of the earth than this one of Dai Nihon, whose soldiers inherit the traditions of so many warlike ages, and uphold them gloriously too.

To-day is the Emperor's birthday, and he has been holding the usual review at Aoyama. A review is always held on this occasion, and this time I have been to see it. It was the most exquisite autumn morning you can imagine (November has nothing to do with winter here) bright and fresh and quite warm enough to be pleasant, the sky cloudless and the air so clear that the glittering cone of Fuji, really so far off, seemed to be quite close to the parade ground. A great crowd had assembled in the space outside and all the approaches were blocked with rickshaws and pedestrians. You never saw such a quiet, well-behaved crowd—no pushing or shoving, and nobody tipsy. They were all very anxious to see, however, in a quiet and well-behaved way, and it amused us not a little to see the agitation of the policemen who were engaged in the quite superfluous task of keeping order. What disturbed these little functionaries was that the crowd would insist on standing on a little grass bank there was in one place, so as to get a better view. This was very dreadful of them, because you must never, never, never look down on the Mikado from a height. When he goes through the streets it is the extreme of rudeness to be seen at an upper window; Peeping Tom of Coventry was



WATCHING THE REVIEW.



nothing to it. It seemed that even this little grass bank, only a few inches high was an impropriety in view of the fact that Majesty was to pass by, so the little policemen ran up and down the line of spectators begging of them to descend to the level ground, which they always did without any demur. But I regret to say that even Japanese human nature was not proof against the temptation to get up again the moment their backs were turned, so when they came back they had to begin all over again, and their unhappiness was quite pitiful to see. We amused ourselves during the interval of waiting by watching the troops, of whom there seemed to be a large number, and tremendously useful they looked, though candour obliges one to admit that from a parade-ground point of view they were not too ornamental, and looked as if a little brushing and polishing would have done their uniforms and accoutrements no harm. Presently the Imperial carriages appeared, rather begilt, and with a monstrous sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum shining golden on the door of each; the coachmen and footmen in correct European state liveries also very golden to behold. His Majesty, in a European uniform apparently all gold together and with a stiff white plume in his headgear, went slowly round the parade ground on horseback followed by his staff and the foreign attachés. I had seen a good many reviews, of course, but this one seemed rather unique on account of the unusual character of the Imperial reviewer. Ordinary kings and kaisers one is used to, and a Mikado of the ancient type, the divine descendant of the Sun, too sacred to be seen by mortal eyes, one can at least imagine; but divinity in buttons and trousers reviewing troops armed with all the latest improvements and also in trousers, calls for much readjustment of one's ideas. But if you had seen the exceedingly smart way the little soldiers went through their evolutions—especially the artillery, you would understand how it is that they can give so good an account of themselves in an actual campaign. It was quite admirable, and one cannot be surprised if they think a good deal of themselves.

To-day I went to see the "Arsenal" and its garden. The Arsenal itself is a hideous red-brick affair, built on the site of the old palace of the princes of Mito, a famous branch of the Tokugawa house. No doubt it is well worth seeing to those who understand the subject of firearms, but to me it was interesting chiefly as a typically Japanese institution—the new and practical standing on the site of the vanished picturesque—though this Murata rifle which they make here is said to be of the highest excellence. But the garden, not the arsenal, was what delighted me. It has not been done away with or modernised at all, but remains a typical Japanese garden, though on a very unusual scale. It was laid out by the famous literary Prince of Mito, grandson of Ieyasu, for the delight of his old age, and represents all manner of things you would never expect any garden to represent, most of them of Chinese classical allusion—history and philosophy, I believe—just as if we were to make little corners in our gardens, one here artfully suggesting the story of Harmodius and Aristogiton, and another there neatly setting forth the Categories of Aristotle. But you do not need to know anything about Chinese classics to appreciate the loveliness of this old-world garden, hidden so strangely in the midst of the modern city, with its wonderful trees—just now the most conspicuous are the flaming maples—its quaint stone bridges crossing the little river that runs fantastically through it, its huge lake, in which the trees are mirrored, full, evidently, of lotus flowers in summer, though they are over now and nothing shows of them but their unsightly brown remains. Then there are woods of all sorts of trees, tall and stately or small and fantastically trained—among them some now leafless persimmons, their golden balls glowing brightly against the darkness of the pines. I could spend years in this garden, but alas! one may never come here alone, and you know what going anywhere with a cicerone is—walking straight through and being told what everything is as you pass; and here the situation in this case is complicated by the necessity of replying to everything in Japanese. Only there is one good thing—you need not

vary your remarks very much in order to be appreciative. I always think of the story of some unhappy German royalty, who, on being shown over a museum by a learned professor, replied to everything, "Sehr merkwurdig." I always say to everything I am told in Japan, "So desu ka?" Or, if extreme politeness seems to be called for, one can always substitute, "Sayo de gozaimasu ka?" They both mean nothing but, "Is that so?" but as an invariable answer this does not seem to be considered so feeble as it might be in English, and it has the advantage, if necessary, of concealing the fact that you have not understood a word that has been said. I notice that Japanese visitors who go over temples and things with the same cicerone as myself say this the whole time, so it must be all right. Only, to be sure, they generally accompany it with a nice little hiss made by sucking in the breath as though the words were hot in their mouths. I have not yet attained to making this sound with becoming gravity, but may still in time achieve it; one's education progresses with astonishing rapidity in this country. It appears to be the height of politeness to make that sound at intervals in Japanese conversation—I suppose to show that any words addressed to so honourable a person as the one you are talking to taste nice in your mouth (for I am obliged to admit that audible signs of satisfaction in eating are considered quite extremely polite among those classes which have come less in contact with Western sophistication than most of those one meets in Tokyo).

Apropos, there has been a great controversy going on lately in some of the native papers, I believe, as to the desirability or otherwise of adopting foreign etiquette. The newspaper is an institution which seems to have grown up and flourished exceedingly in the climate of Japan, in spite of the fact that until the last few years anything like an expression of opinion on political subjects was likely to be attended by various unpleasant consequences, including the imprisonment of the editor. This latter difficulty was overcome by the naive device of the "prison editor," of which you have heard. His name

was given out as that of the editor of the paper, but his business consisted solely in going to prison whenever the paper had committed an indiscretion, while the real editor, whose name never appeared as such, quietly carried on the paper as though nothing had happened. Now, I believe, the prison editor, like so many other picturesque institutions, is becoming a thing of the past, as more freedom is allowed, and also more skill has been acquired by the native journalist in the art of safe expression; though indeed, to judge by quotations from the vernacular press which we have seen in the papers which are published in English, a very fair amount of free speaking seems to be perfectly safe. There are two or three of these English newspapers, and it is on these, of course, that I depend for information as to the doings of the world in Japan and out of it. The one I like best is the *Japan Times*, published in Tokyo, as nice a little paper as one need want to see—Japanese, but in English. (There are others also, edited by and for foreigners.) But the great papers of the country are naturally in Japanese, and their name seems to be Legion; you never see a Japanese in a train or anywhere else who is not reading one or another of them. They all look much the same to me, except that their size varies, and also the colour of the paper they are printed on. One also, I observe—or perhaps more than one—has a column in English as well; I suppose for the natives to practice on, which they have an irritating habit of doing half aloud in public places. Those one hears most of are the *Nichi Nichi Shimbun* and the *Jiji Shimpō*, which latter, to judge by extracts given in the English papers, seems to be addicted to the heated discussion of all manner of subjects with a breezy confidence altogether refreshing to minds trained in the hesitating traditions of the West. It was, I believe, edited, until lately, by a famous pioneer of the higher education and new ideas generally, whose influence on Young Japan has evidently been enormous. There are any number of smaller papers; some enlivened by woodcuts representing, I suppose, the personages of the *feuilleton* which seems to be a regular part of these

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STYLES OF LETTERS.

[Chinese Proverb: "Hiroyu koriwo alsuruwo jintoyu "—To love universally is true humility.]

Kaisho (book letters). 2. Ditto. 3. Gyōsho (script letters). 4. Ditto. 5. Hirakana (Japanese script).



publications, also by any amount of advertisements, some of which are also illustrated. These illustrations are of the highest value ; for they show one which way up the paper should be held, which is no doubt the first step towards mastering the contents. There are several grades of these papers, the lowest, I am given to understand, very low indeed. But it is all the same to me, as they are all in the awful native style of writing—Chinese characters mixed with Japanese syllabic signs. You can tell a Chinese document from a Japanese one in this way : the Chinese is all hieroglyphics more or less square and elaborate and suggestive of very complicated and dangerous scaffolding, the Japanese is mixed up with a number of smaller, rounder, and less pretentious things—the kana, or native syllabic signs—which rather interfere with the symmetrical and neat appearance of the Chinese. People at home write out in a cheerful way about “learning Japanese,” as though they were talking of some trifling undertaking like learning Greek or Latin. “Japanese,” to begin with, is about three different languages according to who the speaker is, and how polite he or she wants to be. I say “she” because I understand that in addition to the “Court,” the “polite,” and the “familiar” dialects there is also a “style for women.” Then again we are told—just as an encouragement to persevere—that the written language is wholly different from any of the spoken varieties. However, that troubles me full little, as I can hardly hope to live long enough, either in Japan or out of it, to arrive at reading any of the words, let alone wondering what they mean. You see you do not write a Japanese word ; you draw a Chinese sign, consisting of perhaps a dozen little strokes all of different lengths and curves and at different angles. Each of these structures represents not a sound but an idea, so the Chinese and Japanese, even without understanding a word of each other’s languages when spoken, are perfectly intelligible to each other when they write. I suppose, in fact, that these signs would do for English or any other language as well. Perhaps as a universal medium of communication they might even be

quite useful; they certainly look nicer than "Volapuk." Only I should think most people would find it easier to learn an indefinite number of languages than these characters, for I understand there are one or two millions of them. I have tried hard to remember some, but have only acquired about six for all my pains, and these I am by no means sure of. The kana are a Japanese invention; they are scraps broken off the Chinese characters, as it were, and represent not ideas but sounds—syllables—and though they too are rather dreadful, I could imagine one

ワ wa	ラ ra	ヤ yā	マ ma	ハ ha	ナ na	タ ta	サ sa	カ ka	ア a
ヰ wi	リ ri	イ yi	ミ mi	ヒ hi	ニ ni	チ chi	シ shi	キ ki	イ i
ウ wu	ル ru	ユ yu	ム mu	フ hu	ヌ nu	ツ tsu	ス su	ク ku	ウ u
エ we	レ re	エ ye	メ me	ヘ he	ネ ne	テ te	セ se	ケ ke	エ o
ヲ wo	ロ ro	ヨ yo	モ mo	ホ ho	ノ no	ト to	ソ so	コ ko	オ o

JAPANESE SYLLABARY.

might live long enough to learn them in time. They are not much used alone, however, and the few books which are printed in kana only are said to be merely for women, for whom a comparatively small stock of Chinese characters is supposed to be enough. The names of these kana can be learnt by heart; they form a sort of Japanese alphabet. But instead of a bald A, B, C, the "Iroha" (as it is called from the first three syllables) is a pretty little poem expressive of the Buddhist disdain for the impermanence of the things of earth.

So you need not wonder if I cannot read the newspapers. It is a pity, however, that one cannot, for I suspect that one thereby loses not a little amusement, that is if their articles on political subjects are at all like the conversation of those of one's native acquaintance who are interested in these matters. To say that party feeling runs high here is a distinct understatement; it even makes itself felt in private life with quite amusing results; it is almost embarrassing to know people connected with opposite parties. The subject of these parties seems to me a deep one, and not to be lightly investigated. There are several of them, each thirsting for the blood of the others so to speak, but exactly what their respective views are is a hard thing to find out, and I have given it up in despair. Most of my acquaintances belong to the "Progressive" party, which is for Europeanising on a grand scale, and also apparently highly democratic. It is in opposition just now; the Government party is of more moderate views. There is also a party called the "Imperialist," but what its exact "platform" may be I have never very clearly understood. Mutual abuse and accusations of a personal nature, especially on the subject of corruption, seem to be rather favourite weapons of controversy, and very astounding things are said about prominent people without creating any particular stir. But it is amazing how parties seem to change and individuals to transfer themselves from one to another, apparently in pure lightness of heart. The accounts that have been given to me of the changes and permutations that have taken place are absolutely bewildering. But somehow they manage to get on just the same, and so far as the outside world is concerned their policy seems to have at least as much continuity as that of any other country, and this will probably be the case so long as the chief framers of the Constitution are still alive and can influence the course of affairs.

In spite of all the heated expressions we hear every day on the subject of politics, the debates in the Diet seem quiet enough, so far as I have been able to see. The Diet consists of two Chambers—Peers and Representa-

tives respectively—housed in not very magnificent buildings, which, however, are said to be merely temporary. This morning I attended a sitting of the House of Representatives. The Chamber is a rectangular hall with galleries for spectators on three sides and on the fourth the chair and a rostrum from which speeches are delivered. The place is singularly unlike the House of Commons—not because there is any Oriental suggestion about it, but because it is so very unornamental, and also because each member, instead of reclining at ease upon a long bench, sits bolt upright at a desk of his own covered with documents and writing materials. What they do with all



THE HOUSES OF THE DIET.

these things I cannot imagine. Some of the papers, I suppose, were the order of the day, but a great deal of writing seemed to be done by everybody and endless written messages carried in and out. Nearly everybody, except the Speaker—or President I think he is called—and the clerks at the table was in Japanese dress; consequently the effect was that of an assembly of gentlemen, and the air of the place was one of dignity; but they all kept on their sandals and sat on chairs, and the desks were high to match. The proceedings were distinctly dull. The President talked a good deal, and several set speeches were delivered from the rostrum in the usual unimpassioned, jerky voice that seems to go with the

language. (A Japanese speech always sounds to me as though the speaker tries to say five or six words as fast as he can—then a sudden stop—then five or six more and another jerk, all in the same tone of voice.) Other members spoke afterwards from their seats as the debate went on; there was little interruption of any kind, and practically none of those noises with which one is familiar in the House of Commons—no applause, no howling or even “Hear, hear”; sometimes they laughed a little, that was all. But the subjects before the house were hardly thrilling; they were discussing the pros and cons of a new railway most of the time and some other small measures of no apparent interest to anybody. Perhaps when more explosive subjects come up things may be a little more lively. The House of Peers I have also attended more than once. It is not conspicuously different from the Lower House except that on the side where the President sits there is a gilt throne in a recess with a huge gilt chrysanthemum above it and crimson and gold curtains on either side. This is for the use of the Emperor when present, and there is another gorgeous arrangement on the opposite side—I suppose for the Empress and other inferior beings connected with the Court. The President, who is the representative of one of the great old Kuge families of Kyoto now living in such strangely altered days, sat on the dais in a frock-coat with all that air of being carved out of wood which always distinguishes official Japan in foreign clothes, and presided with immense decorum. One thing struck me as rather odd in both Houses—that in spite of the almost universal wearing of Japanese dress, Japanese etiquette was conspicuous by its absence. There was no bowing, no sucking in of the breath, or other marks of politeness. Yet probably these same persons, once outside the Chamber, would conform to a man to the national usages. It is odd to see how an “advanced” Japanese can be as it were two people. When he is among foreigners he never forgets; he behaves just as they do, shakes hands, stands straight up, never thinks of such a thing as a bow; but five minutes afterwards among

Japanese, even of his own type, you will see him bowing double at every third word, as though he had never in his life heard of foreign manners, or lack of manners. Here in their Legislative Chamber I suppose they feel their surroundings are in a sense foreign, and so instinctively conform to foreign ways.

Dull as these debates generally seem to be, regarded as debates, it is a curious sight enough to see one ; how, new and alien as it all is, they take to it like ducks to the water, and all, too, so much as a matter of course. But this habit of seeming to look on all things new and imported as quite natural and normal is everywhere to be noted among these people. They are never surprised at anything, never appear unaccustomed to anything ; everything is calmly taken for granted whether it be European institutions or inventions or table manners or clothes. They seem to wish to convey the impression that all these things come as naturally to them as to us. Their mental attitude seems to me to be a rather curious one ; they are, I quite believe, thoroughly proud of their past in their hearts, and have a profound regard and veneration for their ancient heroes and the tales and legends concerning them. But in speaking to foreigners many that I have met seem to feel in a certain way ashamed as well. They appear to wish at one and the same time to dissociate the Japan of the present from the Japan of the past, and yet to convey to you the impression that all you see is the natural product of these same ancient times, and that though you may think there has been a violent dislocation and a wholesale abandonment of the native for the foreign, you are quite mistaken, and that this or that institution was really always in existence. On the one hand they have an uneasy feeling that their heroic, but perhaps rather bloodthirsty, past may seem a little barbarous to the foreigner, and wish to disclaim all connection with it ; on the other they would like to make out that the past was not so barbarous after all, by giving you to understand that what you see around you is not so new as you think. I was much amused the other day by a Japanese ac-

quaintance who sat beside me in the theatre while a historical drama was being represented. To me the state of society pictured on the stage was delightfully picturesque and attractive; the heroic loyalty and noble sentiments of the exalted characters seemed to me to leave nothing to desire—in fact, my mental attitude was one of as respectful admiration as the most patriotic Japanese could wish for on the part of any foreigner. But my friend was obviously uneasy. He was careful first to inform me that all this was “very old time” (it was in fact supposed to be the seventeenth century), and that it was not to be taken too seriously. “The people like it, you know,” said he; “very silly, very old time—only for the people.” This sort of thing during the interminable waits between the acts; but I could see that while the performance was actually going on he had forgotten all about his foreign friends and their presumable contempt, and was as deeply stirred by what he saw as any of “the people.” But after the curtain fell, or rather was drawn across, he would regularly pull himself together with the same formula, “Very silly, very old time; I know you laugh—it is for the people.” I could not get him to believe in my view of it at all, and I sadly fear my presence quite spoiled his enjoyment, because of the ever-present dread that the performance might be lowering his country in my eyes as a foreigner. In the middle of the historical tragedy came a sort of musical interlude—I use the word musical in a strictly Japanese sense—in which fairies and devils were rather prominent. This was the climax of my friend’s unhappiness; he was so dreadfully afraid that I would carry away the impression that Young Japan believed in the supernatural. “No meaning,” he kept saying, “no meaning at all. Only for the people.” I tried for his consolation to explain that even in England hobgoblins might appear on the stage unforbidden by the higher culture; but he clearly did not believe that what I said was anything more than part of that system of polite depreciation of everything connected with oneself which makes it so hopeless really to exchange ideas with a Japanese.

As a rule, I observe, they do not care to tell you too much about their country's past. They do not mind a picturesque legend, or the story of some grand battle, but they do not like you to know too much about their constitutional history, and it is as well not to betray superfluous information on points of this kind. There is a desire on the part of a good many of them to glide rather gently over the fact of the absolute nonentity of the Mikado during so many centuries (to take one instance), so as to give an air of antiquity to existing institutions. Several very unblushing statements have been made to me with this laudable end in view: how the Emperor This or That did such or such a thing, I well-knowing all the time that his Majesty had been something much less than a cipher all his august days, and had never done anything more exciting than perhaps compose a stanza to the Moon. But of course one is not so rude as to say what one knows. I am told by those who can read them that the same tendency is to be discovered in the text-books of history used in the schools.

The Mikado, by the way, does not seem ever to be called by this name, so much endeared to the British public by Gilbert and Sullivan. The Japanese call him the "Tenshi" or "Son of Heaven," or else "Tenno"—"Heavenly Sovereign"—in their own language, and in English they call him simply "the Emperor," without allusion to Heaven. Anyway he is rather a difficulty when one is very much "advanced" and wishes to be much *en rapport* with one's foreign friends. For of course one is really and seriously profoundly attached to the very ground he walks on (now that he does such a thing), and one is ready at any moment to undergo anything on his behalf. Now it is the official doctrine that he is descended from the Goddess of the Sun, and all loyalty and propriety demand acquiescence in this proposition; at the same time one has learnt English and is proud of one's acquaintance with Herbert Spencer and Darwin and all these people, and does not of course believe in gods of any kind, and would above all things not wish one's

foreign friends to suspect one of such ridiculous weakness. Yet—loyalty and devotion to the Tenshi Sama? Ah, it is an indiscreet and tactless subject for any foreigner to touch upon. A very interesting and intelligent gentleman of our acquaintance was dining with us one night. This subject came up somehow, and though we did not ask him, he said that he did not mind owning to us in strict confidence that he did not think it inconsistent with his respect and devotion privately to doubt this dogma, especially in view of the fact that he was (as he told us) a Christian. But a few minutes afterwards he was exceedingly hot about somebody who had spoken disparagingly of the pedigree of some Japanese nobleman, whose blue blood our friend considered not much inferior (if it might be respectfully said) to the Emperor's own, seeing that though his Majesty was descended from the Sun Goddess, the nobleman in question was of the line of some other scarcely less august divinity of Shinto. All this was spoken with much heat, and left one deeply wondering.

As for his Sacred Majesty himself, one naturally hears a good deal, but more from foreign than from Japanese sources, according to which latter he is a model of all the virtues which can adorn a ruler, and of course the rude gossip of foreigners is of no consequence at all. One thing one may be allowed without indiscretion to observe, namely, that he is tall, and also that he never sinks so low as to drive in the same carriage with the Empress, who always follows meekly behind. One thing which strikes one in modern Japan as still picturesque and altogether admirable is the intense devotion of all classes to this Emperor, who seems as it were to represent to them the idea of their country. To most of his subjects he is a mere abstraction; the greater part of them have never seen him, and have heard little or nothing about him; many evidently do not even know his name. He is never called by it by any chance, but it is Mutsuhito (not pronounced exactly as you would think from the way it is spelt). Many people think when they first come here that he is called Meiji because everything is dated "such or such a year of

Meiji," but Meiji is the name of the epoch which began with his reign, not of himself. He is in no way a living personality, such as a European sovereign is, for whom his subjects may entertain a personal affection or other feelings as the case may be, and who is in any case the object of any amount of gossip and personal curiosity. There is nothing of this here: I never heard a word of court gossip or any remarks as to the personal character of the Son of Heaven from any Japanese high or low. He is "the Emperor," that is all, the incarnation, as it were, of the idea of Dai Nihon, and his personality is not a subject which ever seems to occur to them. Probably it is this feeling of abstract loyalty to the throne which keeps the course of Japan so steady on the whole in spite of her fondness for change in matters of internal politics; these things are transitory accidents, the great central fact remains. This intense loyalty is said to be the modern Japanese substitute for a religion; but it is not easy to see where religion begins and patriotism ends in a country whose official cult is, practically, the worship of the Emperor. If you could manage to get behind the polite phrases of the most educated of Japanese you would find a profound conviction of the superiority of his country to every other to be at the root of his views on all subjects whatsoever. He certainly speaks to you very humbly about his country and very respectfully about yours. Everything in Japan, according to him, is poor and inferior, everything in your country is all that is desirable. You may say as much as you like to try to convince him that there are certain things in your country which you do not particularly admire and that you really do think much of certain things in his. He does not in the least mean what he says, and you may talk to the end of time without convincing him that you mean what you say. This is partly politeness, partly pride, and also to a great extent the difference between your language and his, which involves the difference of a whole heaven of thought. It is certainly our custom in England—though it is not perhaps followed in all English-speaking countries—to refrain from loud praises of what is our



THE EMPEROR.



own, but we do not go so far as to think it necessary not only to good manners but even to correctness of diction, almost to grammar, to depreciate extravagantly everything which may be connected with ourselves or our country, however obvious may be its excellences, and to belaud with equal extravagance everything connected with the person we are speaking to. But in Japan it is otherwise, and though they learn to keep honorific expressions out of their English conversation, they still keep to their own method of thinking. England, therefore, in conversation (or whatever the foreigner's country may be) is all that is grand, and Japan is quite a trifle. But all this means nothing at all—it is merely good manners. People are often much disgusted with the obvious insincerity of this way of speaking, and one hears on all sides, "What desperate little humbugs these Japs are." But after all they forget that all this is not meant to deceive; it is instinctive and quite conventional politeness, and it probably never occurs to them that you are taking their words in any literal sense. They think you take it as it is meant, just as we take the politely unmeaning formulæ of social life among ourselves. There is not a Japanese alive who does not think his country worth any six of the countries of the West, but there is none who would be rude enough to say so. They act on this view all the same, and it is this, contrasted with their polite verbal depreciation, which gets them the character of being such unmitigated humbugs. They are greatly interested in Western ways: every one you meet who has not been in Europe or America plies you industriously with questions, not the least because they admire the West, but because they want to make use of it. All these fine new things they are so proud of—railways, telegraphs, commerce—have of course been learnt from Europe and America. And now the great charge brought by the West against them is that having learnt all these things they are not grateful to their teachers—after Europeanising themselves they are not much in love with Europe. Well, perhaps they are not; I do not think they are. But, after all, though it is very dreadful always to

think one is not appreciated, has Japan really any cause to be so very grateful to the West? She owes her present position among the nations, her material progress and all the rest of it, to having learnt all these things from Western nations—that goes without saying—and it never occurs to one of them to deny it. But when gratitude is called for the motives of the person conferring what in the end turns out to have been a benefit have surely got something to do with the question. Will any one seriously contend that Europe and America bestowed all these things on Japan with the sole object of improving that country and of sharing their advantages with her? Did they not, rather, in the first instance force their form of civilisation down her throat, as it were at the point of the bayonet, with vastly little reference to her willingness or otherwise to accept the gift? On the contrary, was not her acceptance of it a mere measure of self-defence—were not the alternatives before her Europeanisation or extinction? She wisely chose to Westernise herself in order to save herself from the clutches of the West, and a very good job she has made of it. She is, of course, in every way the gainer; still, when it comes to talking sentimentally about gratitude and a serpent's tooth and all that sort of thing, it seems only fair to inquire how and to what end the benefits in question were conferred. If you, a perfect stranger, threaten and prepare to knock me down and jump upon me if I do not do a certain thing which I do not wish to do, and when I have done it in order to save myself from your brutal violence it afterwards turns out that, quite apart from the benefit to yourself which you had in view when you forced me to do it, I have managed to make it turn greatly to my advantage also, am I to be romantically grateful to you? I may be glad you did it, as things have turned out, and I may be quite friendly towards you. But gratitude is surely quite another affair. Even if Europe had wanted the gratitude of Japan, the day is gone in which she might have gained it, and certainly her intervention at the close of the war with China has not endeared her to the Japanese heart.

However, one is glad to think Great Britain took no share in that injustice, and that fact is quite realised by Japan. So do not be deluded when you come out here either by your own preconceived ideas as to what Japan ought to think of Europe, or by the polite expressions of your Japanese acquaintances, which mean rather less than nothing. They are passionately attached to their own country, and even if they have been in ours it does not follow that they have brought back that admiration for everything they saw there which we might consider proper. I had a very amusing time the other day trying to find out what a Japanese acquaintance thought of Dundee, the only place in Great Britain which he seemed to know at all well. I could get nothing out of him except that he thought it very different from his own country. Finally I asked him if he did not think it very dirty, and it turned out in the end that this was really all that he thought about it, though he was too polite to say so in so many words. I do not believe that, now they have come to a point where they can feel themselves safe from European aggression, they have, as a nation, any great desire to copy Europe much more, and I also believe that we think they are much more Europeanised than they really are; it seems to me that the innovations are mostly on the surface, and that they are just as Oriental as ever beneath it all. Look at the way the Japanese women are treated. Most foreigners, I fancy, think them vastly more attractive specimens of humanity than the men, but that is not the view of the Japanese themselves; in their eyes a woman is a very contemptible creature indeed. They are not shut up or beaten or otherwise illtreated after the fashion of most Oriental countries, but they count for nothing and are in a position of abject subjection, especially in the higher classes of society. In humble life the wife, in spite of her theoretical subjection, is practically on an equality with her husband, but the wife of the great nobleman is a very humble servant indeed; her well-regulated life is devoted to the practise of the "Three Obediences" of Confucius—obedience to her father, her husband, and,

when a widow, to her eldest son ; though we are told that the worst of all is the obedience to her mother-in-law. The ideal wife submits to everything, resents nothing, serves her husband on bended knee, stays in the house while he pursues his pleasures outside, and never seems otherwise than pleased however well she may know the nature of these amusements. I am not going to discuss this subject, of which you have no doubt read any amount in books. Why I mention it at all is that I had not realised the extent to which these views still prevail in spite of telegraphs and European clothes and all the rest of it. One's Japanese acquaintances are mostly men. They have wives, but one does not hear much about them. Our friend will sit beside us in his foreign clothes and talk fluently on politics and other subjects, possibly even in good English, but all the time we know that his wife is at home under much the same conditions as her grandmother a hundred years ago, and that when our very superior friend goes back to his house she will meet him at the door on bended knees and put her head on the floor to greet him ; also that he will probably take no notice of this salutation, or, if he speaks to her at all, will very likely order her off to do something. He can divorce her, moreover, whenever he chooses, and that for no particular reason : " talking too much " is said to be one of the recognised grounds, for instance. However, things are on the mend in these respects, even if there is still something to be desired. It is beginning to dawn on the native mind that the present state of things looks, perhaps, hardly civilised, and probably this consideration has as much to do with the steps being taken in a forward direction as any regard for the merits of the case. Fortunately the Empress (it is conceivable, by the way, that the position even of an Empress in Japan may leave room for improvement) has ranged herself to some extent on the side of progress and has accorded her patronage to the forward movement, especially in the matter of education.

It is a mistake to think that a Japanese can have any number of wives, as you seem to imagine. He cannot

now, and never could, have more than one legal wife. But he could, and still can, supplement her to any extent permitted by his income, and part of the "whole duty" of the wife was in no case to resent the introduction of one or more "mekake" into the household. In old days the mekake was legally recognised, and though not a wife, she was not regarded as occupying other than an honourable position; her children were regarded by a legal fiction as those of the wife, and could inherit the father's property. About twenty years ago, however, this legal sanction was abolished; the mekake is no longer recognised, and her children are illegitimate and cannot inherit. Of course doing away with legal sanction is one thing and doing away with a thing itself is quite another; still so much progress has been made. In view of this enlightened advance it is amusing to learn that neither the Crown Prince of Japan nor any of the other Imperial children are the offspring of the Empress, "their august mother," as the newspapers call her. This is not to be the case in the next generation, however; future heirs to the Dragon Throne are to be exclusively of legitimate birth.

Still one can see that a change has already begun; quite a number of Japanese ladies of the better classes seem to be on a different footing from any that was dreamed of under the old regime, the most charming hostesses possible, intelligent, and ready to converse, going freely about and entertaining in their own houses just as they might do in England. Things are undoubtedly changing, but this change, unlike certain others less desirable, is bound to be a slow one. But it is something that it should have begun.

Education, too, for girls seems to be progressing beyond the limits of the "three obediences." Little girls in the villages go to school as much as little boys; you may see them trooping in and out in the most remote parts of the country just as though they were in England and enjoying all the sweetness and light diffused there by that latest flower of civilisation, our educational system. There are schools, too, for girls in a higher station in life, and of

more advanced age. I have been to see the Normal School in Tokyo, an institution for the higher education of young women. I saw the class-rooms, all very nice and airy, and the students, all very serious and well-behaved, but was not much the wiser for my inspection so far as ascertaining the standard of teaching was concerned. I perceived that English, French, geography,



THE EMPRESS IN JAPANESE COURT DRESS.

arithmetic, and other more advanced subjects were being taught, but except in the language classes I did not get much beyond this, seeing that books and blackboards conveyed nothing at all to my mind. Yesterday, moreover, I went to see the "Peeress's School." This institution really seems to mark a wonderful step in advance, for that a peeress (which word in this connection does not mean a peeress at all, but a peer's daughter)

should learn anything particular, not to speak of going out of doors to do so, is a great innovation. It owes its existence, I believe, to the exertions of the Empress, who, as I said before, is believed to be very liberal-minded and to have greatly at heart the progress of the women of the country.

The school was not by any means such a pretty sight as one might have expected, however, for the dresses of the scholars were not remarkable for their beauty. They wore what almost amounted to a uniform, so much alike they looked in the costume which seems to be considered appropriate to school-girls of all classes, namely, dark crimson hakama and a haori of a black and yellow striped material which to me always suggests a wasp. It is not ugly in itself, but I do not think it goes well with crimson hakama. Their hair, too, was mostly either hanging straight down in a pigtail after the fashion of a little English school-child or of a Chinaman, or else was done in that modified European style which is so terribly unbecoming to the Japanese face—combed straight back from the forehead and coiled round on the top of the head. I was surprised at the extreme plainness of the young “peeresses” till I noticed this. The Japanese style of hairdressing may be inconvenient and have other drawbacks, but it is certainly becoming to Japanese features. The same girl who looks so stupid and lumpy when her hair is done in this quasi-European way would be at once transformed into the usual fascinating picture if her hair were arranged in native style. However, all this has nothing to do with what I went to see, namely, the progress of the “higher education” among the female aristocracy of Japan. The pupils here were of all ages, from the smallest tots to young ladies almost of the age at which it is customary to marry in this country. Nearly all the junior classes were doing nothing else than learning to write—of course a necessary preliminary to learning in every country. But one could scarcely help groaning as one saw the number of years which here have to be devoted perforce to this first essential step. Tiny mites squatted daintily before their low desks,

tracing huge characters on tissue paper with a paint-brush, already showing more skill in doing so than a lifetime would teach me, for of course this faculty of making sweeping strokes with the whole arm is more or less hereditary. I do not see how any one who has been used to write by merely wriggling two joints of two fingers and is descended from ancestors who have done the same could ever do as these serious little red and yellow babies were doing with their big brushes. But it was not only the babies who were doing this; class after class were hard at it, the character growing smaller as the girls grew bigger. At last I got to a class where geography was being taught, another where the subject was English, and another where a select class of two was struggling with French. Japanese history was going on in another room, and in yet another the composition of verses on a theme set by the teacher—this a wholly native branch of education. No doubt the verses turned out would be quite good of their kind, for this faculty also must come more or less by nature to girls whose ancestors have done this industriously for centuries. I wonder what sort of verses a class of English girls would produce on the spur of the moment on a subject suggested by the teacher and probably connected with the moon? I forget exactly what these girls were writing about; it was not the moon, however, in this case. Finally came a class of musical drill—a most serious, in fact almost melancholy, affair. A native lady with her hair done in the same unbecoming style played on the piano after a very mechanical fashion a nursery ditty—I think it was “Little Bo Peep”—and the peeresses stamped round and round the room in time (as I was given to understand) to the music. But really it was quite painful. They were all wearing heavy laced boots of rough leather too much a stranger to the blacking-brush, and of course they all turned their toes in after the Japanese fashion (which is all right in Japanese footgear, but has an appalling effect in laced boots); also I think it had hardly been realised that though round backs and drooping shoulders are highly correct as Japanese

etiquette they do not go well with "drill," musical or otherwise.

People sometimes talk as though this school were a place of what we call "the higher education." This, I should say, is a distinct mistake. Still, the actual standard of the instruction given matters very little, and I believe the work done is sound and good. But that Japanese maidens of high degree should go to school and learn anything at all is an innovation whose natural and inevitable consequence must be the gradual overthrow of the Oriental theory of a woman's life which still prevails in a great degree, especially among the higher classes. Hence the mere existence of the Peeress's School, quite independently of the subjects taught, cannot but be regarded as one of the brightest signs of the times for the advance of civilisation in Japan.

Yesterday I was at a garden party given in honour of the Emperor's birthday by a nobleman whose garden is famous for its beauty. You never saw so charming a sight as this party was—such a lovely autumn day, such a fairy-like garden, such enchanting costumes! No doubt as the garden was a thoroughly Japanese one, I may have missed many of its more esoteric beauties, and so lost much intellectual pleasure and the consolations of philosophy. Still, even to my ignorant eyes, it was too charming for anything, full as it was of wonderful trees, streams, bridges, waterfalls, and vivid green English-looking turf, and shut out by a screen of scarlet maple from all the the world beyond. It was full also of the most charming living pictures, for the ladies, almost without exception, had the good taste to appear in native dress. Such dozens and scores of the daintiest visions in every delicate shade of mauve and grey and green and brown were fairly bewildering, each with two or three lovely "creations" in the way of kimonos showing one under another, the under ones evidently no less exquisite than the upper. The magnificent embroideries of old days were, alas! not there, though I saw a little on the garments of quite young girls, but the graceful cut and dainty colours still remained, and wonderful obis of stiff brocade and equally

wonderful erections of no less stiff black hair were the crowning glory in every case. It was the prettiest sight possible, even in Japan; the only drawback was that a very large proportion of the gentlemen were in foreign clothes—mostly uniforms. Now a uniform does not look well on anybody, especially if it is almost entirely covered with gold lace, unless it makes some attempt to fit him, and I regret to say that these gorgeous creations rarely seemed to have been made with any reference to the figure of the wearer. So we all walked quietly about and admired the chrysanthemums and performed our obeisances before the royalties present, and then toddled gently away to a marquee where refreshments in the “foreign style” were served on tables with a great deal of massive cutlery. Huge cold pies were the staple of this repast and the cold roast beef of Old England, together with other satisfying things. We had had tiffin, and were still to have dinner, but we all did justice to the good things set before us, including the champagne which appeared at an early stage of the proceedings, followed by ale in glasses. This latter came round to us just as I was struggling with the large jam tart some kind friend had deposited on my plate in the midst of the remains of the cold pie. I thought that politeness required me to take it, but it did not go well with the jam tart, whose flavour was already complicated by the mustard surrounding the pie; however, in the end we all got back to the chrysanthemums. This, you know, is the season of chrysanthemums here no less than at home, and as the chrysanthemum is the Japanese flower *par excellence*, I have been doing what I can to see as much of it as possible. The Japanese idea of beauty in a chrysanthemum appears to be somewhat different from ours, so far as I can make it out. For instance, in this beautiful garden I admired so much yesterday the chrysanthemums are particularly celebrated, and I was much interested in seeing them; but if I were to tell the unblushing truth I should say I had often seen common English chrysanthemums which seemed to me really more beautiful. The most famous of all of these

had many hundreds of blooms from one root, all out at once, in exactly the same state of advancement, and in several colours. Each stalk was trained stiffly out on a wire and each wire ended in a bloom, not particularly large, but each, I believe, remarkable for some special quality, delicacy of filaments, or colour or symmetry, or something else. But the fashion of several colours on one stem always seems more curious than beautiful to untrained foreign eyes. I have been to several chrysanthemum shows, and seen a great many wonderful flowers, but still I really do not know that as far as actual beauty goes, though many, of course, were extremely beautiful, one cannot see quite as good at home.

But to go back to yesterday's party. Its charm—and nothing more charming you ever saw—was that in spite of our host's "progressiveness" it was quite Japanese and had no sham about it. The house was Japanese, the garden was Japanese, and so were the dresses of most of the guests, and the resulting effect was charming and self-respecting. But what would the same entertainment have been at one of these modern brick-and-stone mansions with a foreign garden and attended by guests in foreign clothes? Of course I am not so absurd as to suggest that English houses and gardens are not pretty; I only mean that the Japanese imitation is not so. Imitations rarely are in any case, and unfortunately the Japanese seem able only to seize on the unlovely features of foreign things and leave the rest. If a Japanese nobleman, when he builds him a new house, could reproduce a real European country mansion, it might be imitative and incongruous and so far lacking in dignity, still the thing itself would not be ugly. But when he builds himself an imitation of some pretentious suburban villa, and fills it with all kinds of atrocities and mistakes in furniture in the style of a boarding-house or something of that sort, then he does expose both himself and the new civilisation of his country to ridicule. The thing is in itself no doubt trifling, and does not affect the moral and material advancement of the country, but it does affect that impression on the mind of the foreigner about which

they all seem to be so anxious. So again in the matter of dress. Could anything be less dignified or graceful than the appearance of a Japanese, whether man or woman, in foreign clothes? Their round backs and short legs, their national drooping carriage and sloping shoulders, all these never show—or show to advantage—in Japanese dress; but they make them ridiculous objects in ours, even when the clothes are well cut, which out here they rarely are. As for the women, they look like wax dolls of unsuccessful proportions, and all the charm of their faces vanishes under the malign influences of foreign hairdressing and hats. You may be lost in admiration of a Japanese lady in the morning; her charming face and graceful movements you think a perfect picture. In the afternoon you see her again, dressed for some grand function, and you discover that she has a lumpy, stupid face, devoid of all expression, and perched on the top of a disproportionately long, thin, poking neck, a round back and hollow chest, a ludicrously long body, and hardly any legs. Her walk, so graceful in the morning, is now an awkward waddle, and all her charming dignity has become an air of wooden constraint. The Japanese are very indignant at the common use by English people of the expression “little Japs,” which they say is an expression of contempt. I do not think it is meant as such, but I doubt if it would be so commonly used if they would not imitate our dress and general externals so much. I was walking the other day in a temple garden with a Japanese. He wore the national dress and looked very nice in every way, and it never occurred to me that he was little till he suddenly said, “My head comes just to your shoulder.” So it did, but the general effect of the man was so dignified and good that I had never observed his lack of stature, whereas, of course, had he been in European dress the first thing I should have noticed would have been how absurdly small he was.

As for what Japanese dress really is as worn in Japan, if your ideas of it are derived from fans and screens and the garments you see for sale at home, you are probably under quite a false impression. Gorgeous embroideries

and brilliant colours are things of the past ; they are worn only by geishas when professionally engaged, and by others of a lower class. Men do not wear them at all. Children's clothes are every colour of the rainbow, but as the little girl grows older her colours, though still light, grow more harmonious and subdued—delicate pinks, greys, doves and greens, flecked here and there with scarlet as a



INDOOR DRESS (KIMONO FULL LENGTH).

lining shows at sleeves or hem, getting gradually less and less bright as life goes on, till they arrive at the dark puce or navy blue or brown which are affected by old ladies. You cannot indulge in caprices about your clothes if you are a Japanese lady ; you must wear the colour of your age, and the last thing that would occur to you would be to try to look younger than you really are. The main article of dress is the kimono, which you know at home

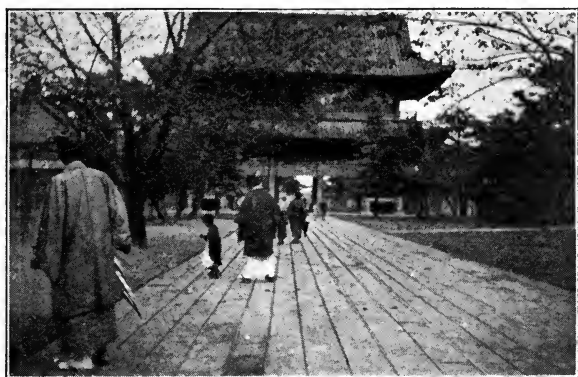
as a dressing-gown, its shape generally entirely spoilt by a ridiculous pleat put into the back, in order, I suppose, to make it look more like a skirt. It is not worn loose and baggy and open down the front as people seem to think, but is wrapped tight round the figure without folds, and is crossed in front from left to right—not the other way as foreigners will wear it, but the Japanese never except as grave-clothes. When a lady is in full dress she wears three of these, one above the other, all the same size and all equally beautiful, the padded rolls at the hem showing how many there are. The kimono is generally



OUTDOOR DRESS (KIMONO RAISED FOR WALKING).

made of some silken material—crêpe seems to be the most usual—and the linings are always silk too. It is really a very long garment, but is generally worn raised round the waist so as just to clear the ground; this is done by an under girdle which does not show. Above it comes the great point of the costume, the “obi,” or sash, of gorgeous brocade, costing probably ever so much, and about thirteen inches wide. Of course only a Japanese woman could wear a band as wide as this successfully, for nature has made their figures perfectly straight and they seem to have no hips, so that the wide sash sits flat and neat, without any crease in the middle. It is passed two or

three times round the waist, and the rolling of the rest of it up into the orthodox bundle at the back is quite a work of art, though the completed result has no very graceful effect; the end of the sash is simply passed flat over a cushion two or three times without folding or tying, and makes the wearer look as though she were carrying something on her back. You may see the obi as a real sash as it used to be worn, with long floating ends, on little girls, and on dancers, but everybody else wears the same hump, the only rather ungraceful thing in the whole costume. Out of doors in cool weather they often wear the haori, a sort of coat, cut very much like



OUTDOOR COSTUME (IN SHIBA PARK).

the kimono, but shorter and scantier, and embroidered in three places with the family crest, on the back of the neck and on each sleeve. Sometimes this is on the kimono also, but it is never wanting on the haori. Every family has its crest and wears it embroidered on its clothes in this way, and if it is a family of consequence it has it in gold on its utensils. These crests make a very effective ornament used in this way, even in architecture; nothing, for instance, could be better than the decorative effect of the three-leaved crest of the Tokugawas, as one sees it so often on the buildings of their time. In winter there is another outdoor garment which

Japanese women seem to affect a good deal—a long, straight garment, something like a double-breasted coat, always in dark blue cloth, and fastened in front with ornamental frogs of silk cord below the square, open neck, which allows the top of the kimonos to be seen below. Both this garment and the haori have rather a comical effect from behind, for as they are worn over the obi every woman looks like a hunchback.

The men's dress is not really very different. They too wear the kimono, only it is cut short enough to clear the ground without fastening up, and the haori is the same exactly. When any degree of ceremony or smartness is called for they wear silk hakama over the kimono—wide-pleated trousers opening oddly quite half way down the side, and made always of silk, with a narrow stripe in it, and of some subdued colour. They wear an obi too, but only about four or five inches wide. As for coolies and labourers generally, they dress in cool weather in blue cotton garments; in summer their attire calls, as a rule, for little description, as it is conspicuous by its absence.

To-day I have been to call at a Japanese house in rather an outlying part of Tokyo. You have to go round the castle moat and through endless streets before you get to this fascinating neighbourhood, a region of private houses each standing apart in its own garden. These houses have the look of being what in fact many of them are—ecclesiastical buildings turned to secular uses when the sun of Buddhism set some thirty years ago. My friends of to-day have such a house, and very charming it is.

I think I will describe this visit, just to give you an idea of what such a ceremony is like. I went through a large wooden gateway into a court adorned with fancifully-clipped trees and stone lanterns—relics, I suppose, of former days—and so arrived at the steps below the front door. There there was the usual pause, for there is never a bell at these houses, and to knock would be rude, I suppose; besides, there is no particular door to knock at, only paper shoji. What one does is to wait

and make the rickshaw man yell into space, "O tano moshimasu." At last the paper slides opened, and I saw a plump little figure on its knees, which promptly put its head on the floor and said, "Irasshaimashi," which they always say when they open the door. It does not mean anything in particular except that they are glad to see you. We asked if the lady of the house was at home, and on hearing that she was I took off my shoes and went in. (You must always, of course, take off your shoes when you go into a house; you do it on the top step and leave them there.) I followed the plump little maid along the usual slippery passage till she selected part of the long wall of paper slides, and going down on her knees, opened it for me, and I went into the room, feeling, as usual, large and superfluous. The "ok'sama" was not there, but the maid went and brought me the usual flat cushion to squat on in the middle of the floor, also a blue china fire-pot and tobacco-box to keep me happy till she should appear. I spent the time looking through the glass panes which were set in the middle of the shoji, at the beautiful garden behind the house, till my hostess, exquisitely dressed in shades of sage-green, appeared in the side of the wall opposite that by which I had entered. She was evidently very shy, and hesitated what she should do, but finally she made a profound bow without kneeling down, and came forward to meet me, though she did not get so far as to offer to shake hands. I also was suffering agonies of indecision on my own part. Should I stand up as she came in, or should I continue squatting after the custom of the country, and bow down my head to the floor? This sort of question is always a trial. At first, of course, I had no idea of what the native customs might be, and had perforce to follow our own, usually with most inelegant effect. But now one knows to some extent what the ordinary Japanese usage would be under simple circumstances, so the problem is always present—to do after our fashion or after the Japanese? If one follows the European custom, one's friends, not understanding it, may think one rude; if, on the other hand, one follows theirs, and they know what

foreign ways are, they may think one is making fun of them, especially as the performance is sure to be lacking in grace. Besides, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and if one's ideas of the proper etiquette are not correct after all, the situation would be worse than ever. So I generally keep to foreign ways, unless the people I have to do with are evidently quite unused to them, as sometimes happens in the country, then I make shift to be as Japanese as I can without risking a giggle. They are very kind, moreover, and always give one credit for good intentions even when one makes mistakes. On this particular occasion I was rather disconcerted to find the house and its ways very much more Japanese than I had expected from the very Europeanised manners and excellent English of the host and hostess when I had seen them elsewhere; and when the lady of the house gave me a present of eatables to take away with me, the awful idea presented itself that as she was so Japanese perhaps I should have brought a complimentary present after the native fashion, tied up with a particular kind of string, and marked "Rubbish." However, I made my adieux as elegantly as I could, with the usual bowings and apologies. I always make the extravagantly polite speeches suitable to these occasions in Japanese rather than English, because I have learnt them by heart out of a book, and they do not sound so ridiculous as they would in English, so that the danger of looking amused is thereby greatly diminished. To conform to strict Japanese visiting etiquette would be a really serious undertaking, and I have never attempted it, of course. One would need, I should think, to know the language and customs well before such a thing could be successfully achieved. You have not only to make the proper speeches, I believe, but you have to refuse to come beyond the door, and then when you do come in at last you must be careful to take a proper place, and put your head and hands on the ground at appropriate moments, and all kinds of complications like that. Under any circumstances, however, you must manage to get out of the room without knocking anybody over, or losing your balance because you

have "pins and needles" in your feet, as you are sure to have if you are not much used to sitting in Japanese style.

In going to see a Japanese acquaintance one of my chief pleasures is that one not only sees the acquaintance but the acquaintance's house, which is sure to be charming. I will try to give you an idea of what such a house is like. In the first place the principal rooms are all at the back, which in itself seems to me an enormous improvement on our plan. In the country, of course, it does not matter so much, but what can be more abominable than our suburban villas, each staring straight at the unlovely road? Then again a Japanese house has no walls—absolutely none—but it has a great deal of roof. It has no chimneys or fireplaces, no windows and no doors; or if you prefer to look at it in that light, it is all window and door. This, you will say, is a nightmare and not a house. Not at all; it really is a house, and the most charming of houses. It is not built in the ground, because of earthquakes, I believe; also perhaps because of damp, for it is all of wood. It rests on wooden piles, which stand balancing themselves on round stones fixed in the ground, so that when an earthquake comes the whole thing sways quietly with it, and does not come down—at least unless the earthquake is a very bad one. So the whole thing is raised some feet above the ground, with a free passage for air underneath, which surely must be healthy. A verandah, or ledge of dark, beautifully polished wood, runs all round it at the level of the floor, some four or five feet from the ground, and you go up to it by steps quite in the ordinary way. On both the outer and the inner edges of this verandah you may notice grooves running along the floor, or perhaps the paper slides are in their place in the inner line of grooves, forming a wall of white tissue paper, marked off by little wooden divisions into panes a few inches square. These sliding screens, which are called *shoji*, are the same in every house, and everywhere the same size—about six or seven feet high, I should think, by three wide. They are always beautifully fitted, and run very easily. When they

are in place the house is enclosed by them in a paper wall, through which comes a soft, diffused white light without glare or heavy shadows, but when they are drawn back it is all open to the four winds. There is an upper story to which you climb by a steep and very slippery wooden stair, and this upper story has a polished wooden verandah round it also. Above is the roof, always heavy, but otherwise differing in different places; sometimes covered with very pretty curving tiles, sometimes thatched, sometimes shingled, and in the north usually adorned with a remarkable outcrop of large round stones to keep it on, I believe, in the furious gales of winter. In the country districts the thatched roofs of the cottages are often regular gardens covered with flowers, especially lilies, growing on the thatch, an effect which seems to me rather more curious than beautiful, for somehow a row of tall lilies seems out of place on a cottage roof. At night, however, the house has walls after all—wooden ones. These are heavy wooden slides, or shutters, which run in the outer grooves of the verandah, and shut the house up, in fact hermetically seal it—or would do so were it not for the endless draughts which come through cracks and knots in the wood, and save one from asphyxia at the cost of neuralgia.

Inside the house is divided into as many rooms as the convenience of the moment may suggest. The expanse of fine white mats which forms the interior of the building is diversified by polished black lacquer grooves crossing it at frequent intervals at right angles to one another, into any set of which paper walls may be run, and one large room made into two or three or four small ones. Some rooms will have one or more permanent party walls made of plaster, and these feel distinctly more comfortable to live in than those which have all four of paper, for one feels that where a plaster wall is there it is likely to stay, and though Buddhist views as to the transitory nature of all things may be very true and edifying, one does not care to have them exemplified by one's bedroom walls. These permanent walls are always tinted in faint self-colours—pale green or blue or biscuit colour—and if

there be more than one they are often of different colours, often decorated with a sort of shining granulation as though they had been sprinkled with grains of silver. One wall in the principal rooms is always divided into two alcoves; one a recess with a polished floor of some choice wood, raised a few inches from the ground, in which stands a single flower vase or other ornament, and perhaps a writing-box, with one of those long rolling pictures you are familiar with at home hanging on the wall behind, or sometimes a set of three of them. However many ornaments and works of art a family may have, they don't have a crowd of them in a room at once after our fashion. One at a time is their plan, and then when they get tired of seeing it, or there is some other reason for changing it, it is put away in the family go-down or store-house and another is brought out. The division between the two alcoves is generally the natural trunk of a tree of some beautiful wood, sometimes polished and sometimes with the bark on. The other alcove generally contains a cupboard whose doors are sliding panels, in a fine house beautifully decorated by hand, in a more humble one merely covered with some dainty ornamental paper, with perhaps a slight powdering of gold dust or a few sprays of cherry-blossom on it—nothing else, except the little metal recess in which you put your finger when you want to move the slide, and which is often quite an ornament in itself. There is not another thing in the room but the mats on the floor and the flat silk cushions or quilts for sitting on, besides, of course, the inevitable fire-pot and smoking apparatus. “Mat,” by the way, is a word which does not convey the least idea of what the thing itself really is—at least it did not to me till I came here, and I doubt if it does to you. These “tatami” are not loose textile things which can be folded or rolled up; they are rectangular wooden frames, always the same size—about six feet by three—filled in with coarse straw to make a soft elastic padding, and the whole covered with fine matting of rice straw, rather greenish when quite new, but turning ivory-yellow after a while. The edges are bound with cloth or silk, generally black and

white in fine ones, the commoner with plain black stuff. These things make the nicest floor covering you can imagine, firm and smooth, and yet elastic. They are rather expensive, I believe, and the Japanese value them very highly; it is a dreadful thing to do anything to spoil them. Of course, as they answer the combined purposes of chairs, tables, beds, sofas, and everything else, you may understand why one may not walk on them in boots or shoes one has been out in; besides, apart from the bringing in of dirt, the heels would spoil them at once. They



A SITTING-ROOM.

appear not to make mats for the houses, but houses for the mats in this country. They are always the same size—six feet by three—and they make their rooms (which are always rectangular) in multiples of three and six feet, and the size of a room is always expressed in terms of mats. Eight-mat and twelve-mat rooms are very common, and some are even as small as four and a half.

So you see that in a house like this there is not an unlimited scope for extravagance. No costly curtains,

carpets, and furniture, no pictures to speak of, though the few there are may be extremely valuable. The awful chromo-lithograph beloved by our lower classes is unknown; if a Japanese cannot have a good picture he contents himself with a scroll on which some moral or poetical sentiment is inscribed in elegant Chinese characters. Sometimes these kakemono, adorned only with writing, are quite as valuable as those which have pictures. One may have a good deal of decoration on one's "fusuma," however—that is, on the inner sliding screens which are made of heavy plain paper, not divided into little panes like the outer ones, which are called shoji. Fusuma, decorated by great artists, are among the choicest treasures of palaces and monasteries and noblemen's houses; sometimes an educated eye is needed to see their beauty—to me, for instance, several very famous paintings of this sort look like nothing at all, but I am told they are masterpieces of this or the other school and wonderfully fine. Then again there is an opportunity for decoration in the "ramma"—ventilating panels of open woodwork which run under the ceiling like a frieze. In temples and grand palaces there is often very beautiful wood-carving to be seen in these, and they may be extremely valuable, but beyond these things the adornment of a Japanese house can consist only in the beauty of the polished woods that are used throughout it (unless, indeed, as is sometimes the case, there is a highly decorated ceiling).

To-day I have been shopping the whole afternoon in the "Kwankoba"—that is to say, the bazaar—in Shiba Park. This is about the best place for the foreign victim who wants simple native things to shop in, inasmuch as the price of everything is marked in plain figures—plain, that is, to Japanese eyes, and not too hopelessly obscure to the foreigner who has mastered the numerals (which are really quite simple) and the awful convulsions of the pen which stand respectively for "yen" and "sen." Then the affable vendor cannot cheat you though he would; but my own experience has been that he never tries to do so. I often pick up a thing and ask the price without

mentioning that I have read what is on the ticket, and they have never once told me more than the price marked. I must say, apropos, that so far as my own personal experience goes I have seen nothing to justify the impression which seems to prevail among foreigners as to Japanese dishonesty. As a rule if you ask the price of anything in an ordinary shop they will name a sum three or four times as large as they expect to get, but that is not peculiar to Japan or even to the East, and, besides, bargaining is looked on by common consent as part of the business of life (and I do believe of the pleasures too). But I have never found that they try to cheat one about change or to palm off bad money. Moreover, though I never lock up my luggage (for the simple reason that I cannot do so, as I never take anything about but the native "kori," which cannot be locked), I have never had so much as a pin stolen, either on the railway or in any native inn or tea-house where I have stayed, however humble. Still it is an unfortunate fact that the reputation of the Japanese merchant is by no means like that of Cæsar's wife, in the eyes of his foreign competitors at least, and his ways of doing business are said not to reflect very clearly that scrupulous code of honour which was the glory of Old Japan. But then it is only fair to consider that Old Japan knew nothing of business in our sense of commercial transactions on a large scale. Foreign trade was interdicted under the severest of all penalties, and the little trader who toiled for petty gains within the borders of the land was a very humble person indeed, his class the lowest of the four into which feudal society was divided, and himself an object of something very like contempt. So perhaps it may be a little hard to expect that a very high sentiment of honour should grow up, like Aladdin's palace, in a single night, or at least in a single generation, among those who now form a class which, as such, would have been despised by others, and in consequence probably despised themselves through long centuries of the nation's past. The whole thing may be a gross libel on Young Japan; but the testimony of foreign merchants and of consular reports alike

goes against her. Though all admit honourable exceptions, the unpleasant fact remains that there is not a foreign merchant who would not trust a Chinaman rather than a Japanese in matters of business. And this is a crying pity surely, and a grief to all lovers of Japan. Let us hope that, whether the charge be true or false at present, the day may soon come when it may die away, disproved by the obvious logic of facts.

But to return to the Kwankoba. You can pick up all sorts of amusing things here, meant not for European but for native customers, and mostly very cheap—all sorts of native household utensils in black or red lacquer, boxes and bowls and trays, chopsticks in bundles, pipes and tobacco pouches, stationery, dress materials, pictures, and carpets, these latter very fascinating, blue and white, made of cotton and jute, and all quite cheap.

Then in addition to the attractions of the Kwankoba itself, there is the fascination of its surroundings. It is in the romantic region now called Shiba Park, a neighbourhood once sacred as the precincts of the great Temple of Zojoji, honoured by the special patronage of the Tokugawa family, and the last resting-place of many of the Shoguns of that house. Part of it is now a residential district, a region of beautiful old houses and gardens, once subsidiary temples or ecclesiastical dwellings, now inhabited by well-to-do families, but still highly picturesque. The part nearest to the temples has nothing in it even yet but trees, avenues of pines and cherry-trees for the most part, in front of the temples and heavy groves of cryptomerias and other trees on the rising ground behind. I shall not try to describe the marvels of the mausolea of the Shoguns, which stand each in its own grounds beside the main temple; their wonders of gold and colour, their carvings and fine lacquer, have made them famous among the masterpieces of Japanese art. But I wish I could give you an idea of the exquisite beauty and solemnity of the grounds amidst which they stand, lonely in the midst of the rush of a city that has forgotten its past, silent save for the rustling of the wind in their solemn groves and the cries of the

birds wheeling overhead; their glory of carved screen and golden wall, their gates and lanterns of stone and bronze, standing unnoticed from year to year under sun and storm.

Before I began my shopping to-day I was at a Shinto function at the temple of Toshogu (Ieyasu), also in the Shiba Park. I did not know that anything of the sort was going to take place, but when I was passing the gate an old priest with whom I long ago made friends told me that there would be one at half-past eleven if I cared to

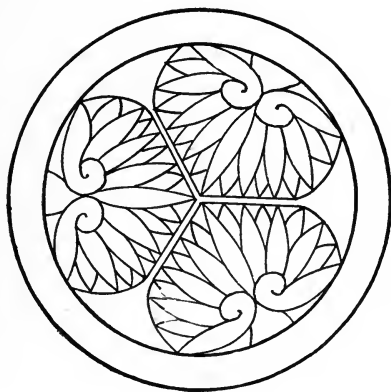


GATE AT ONE OF THE SHIBA TEMPLES.

come to it, and that the wooden portrait statue of the divinity would then be exposed for our veneration. I wanted to see this sacred object, because it is a famous specimen of Japanese art, so I stayed. The ceremony was of the usual Shinto type, and was presided over by the image, which sat cross-legged in a very beautiful shrine of gold lacquer which I had never seen open before. If it is really a good likeness, however, the great Shogun must have been less remarkable for beauty than he was for brains. After the ceremony the clergy invited me to tea. Somehow it seems to be my luck to make friends with ecclesiastics of both religions. I have

had tea and talk at quite a number of temples, both Buddhist and Shinto. Yesterday's conversation was of the usual type ; my reverend friends got more information out of me than I did out of them, but at any rate I added to my collection of sweets. I have preserved quite a lot of sweets which have been given to me at these temple teas, Buddhist and Shinto indiscriminately, as well as nice little slips of white wood, and other objects of Shinto piety, and Buddhist charms and paper fans.

This afternoon we had a cold, drizzling rain, but I went on a pilgrimage all the same—quite a “Japanesey” pilgrimage, for it was to the temple of Sengakuji to see



TOKUGAWA CREST.

the tombs of the “Forty-seven Ronins,” mirrors of Japanese heroism, the retainers of the Lord of Takumi, who gave up their lives to avenge his death, and who lie there with the master for whose sake they died. Some people seem to think this story funny ; I cannot see it in that light myself. It may not be in accordance with our beliefs, but these people in any case acted up to their own lights, and to me at least the pathetic relics of the last days of the Ronins, armour and garments faded and crumbling, rusty dirks with which each man dealt himself a bloody death for an unselfish ideal, seemed worthy enough of the pious care which guards them so reverently

to this day. Their memory is green still in the hearts of their countrymen in spite of the two centuries which separate them from the Japan of the present, and still, on this grey December afternoon of an age so remote in thought if not in time from theirs, the little sticks of incense burn before their graves, and flowers and verses lie upon them as they have done for generations past. To me, standing under the drizzling rain to watch the incense smouldering on the grave of Oishi Kuranosuke, the thin blue wreath rising up to heaven seemed the symbol of a hidden continuity between the practical and perhaps rather materialistic spirit of the Japan of to-day and its unpractically heroic past, for one feels that "Yamato damashi" will never be extinct so long as this deed of old-world chivalry appeals so strongly to the national imagination.

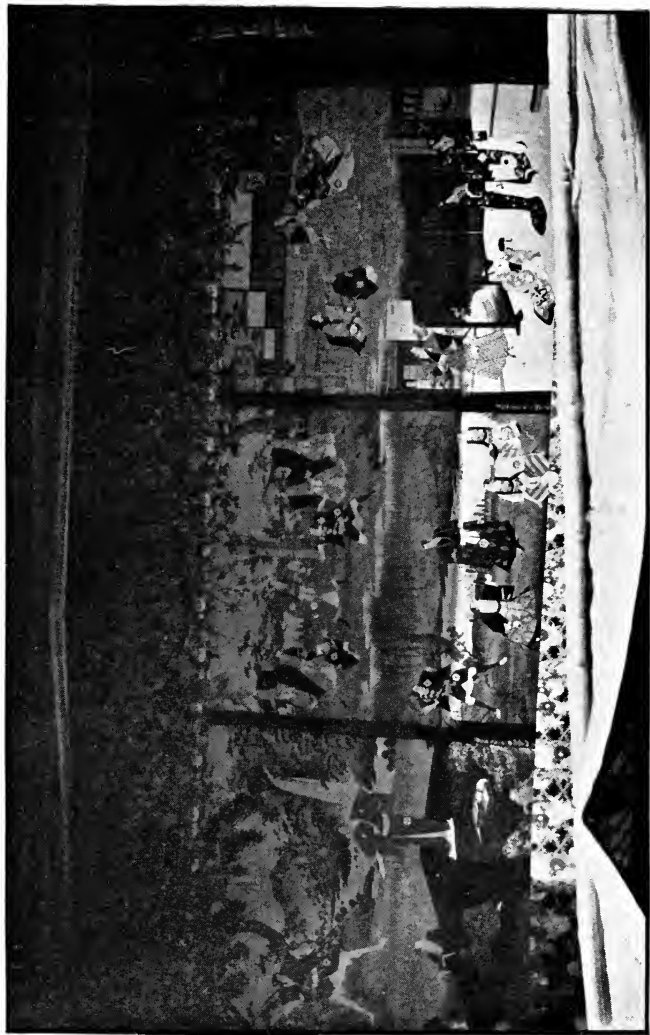
CHAPTER VIII

THE DRAMA

I TOLD you in my last that I was going to the theatre for the first time, and I accordingly did so, greatly to the upsetting of my preconceived ideas on the subject. R—— and I meant to go immediately after breakfast, but somehow did not. I suppose we rather failed to realise that nine o'clock as the hour of beginning was an actual fact; also, I think, that at the back of our minds there was a feeling that as the whole would be unintelligible and probably far from interesting or pretty, a little of it would most likely go a long way, and that it did not matter at what hour of the day one got that little. Any way it was after tiffin instead of after breakfast that we went.

The theatre was not the largest or newest in Tokyo; that is called the Kabukiza, and is quite a European building, to judge by the outside at least. But it is closed just now, so we went to another one a long way off, but said to be very good. It was not European, whatever else it may have been, either outside or in. Outside it was a rambling wooden erection, of more or less the usual type, and gay with innumerable flags and streamers of the ordinary long narrow shape, fluttering on all sides from tall poles. No doubt the legends on these would set forth the information usually given on theatre posters, but we were none the wiser. We went in at one of the doors and found ourselves in a small square space containing wooden clogs in bewildering multitudes, and also a few men all talking at once. From one of these we

got our tickets, which cost about five shillings each—not an enormous price certainly for good seats, but somehow it seemed rather out of proportion with other purely native charges. It was not an imposition either, but the regular price (for foreigners) as advertised and posted up. So in we went, wearing our shoes and accompanied by people who carried the inevitable rush-bottomed chair the native mind always associates with the idea of a foreigner. Inside we found something quite new. The building, to begin with, was rectangular, not horseshoe-shaped, and was wider, I think, than it was deep. No gilding to be seen, no draperies, no boxes, only a gallery of quite plain wood ran round three sides. The parterre was the floor all matted like any other room, but divided into little spaces of perhaps four or five feet square by wooden rails running at right angles with each other at a height of about a foot from the ground. In each of these little pens sat a cheerful group, perhaps a whole family—father, mother, and children—all perfectly happy, all deeply absorbed in the play, and nearly all smoking quite recklessly, as it seemed to me, in a building all of wood and matting. But I consoled myself by reflecting that the house was in fact all exit; the walls behind our backs were not really walls at all, but only sliding panels opening directly on to the street. The house seemed perfectly full, both floor and gallery, which latter, as far as we could see, was seated in the same way as the parterre. Some of the seats there must be considered the best in the house, for they seemed to expect us to go there at first, and said they were “joto,” and cost seven shillings each. But I have always found that when one is in quest of diversion in Japan all things joto are to be avoided, for it generally means that one will either be quite alone or else see nothing but foreigners, so when we heard these seats were joto we determined to have none of them, and went to those which were next in price, namely, those at the back under the gallery—which at home would be considered very bad seats in the pit, but here, I suppose, must be looked on as quite good, as they are the second highest in price. Any



POSTER OUTSIDE A KYOTO THEATRE: SCENES FROM THE PLAY WITHIN.



way we saw very well and had plenty of native neighbours, who were almost as much interested by our proximity as we were by theirs. They gave us chairs but we could not endure them for very long, so we took off our shoes and sat on the floor *à la Japonaise*, in less dignity but more comfort.

The stage was concealed by a curtain, not very high, but so broad as to extend across the whole of one side of the building, and that too one of the longer sides. It seemed to be made of cotton or silk, or some other very thin material; it hung apparently on a rod, and was covered with what I believe were advertisements of cigarettes and beer. Our curiosity was much excited by two long bridges or platforms of polished wood, which ran from the stage to the back of the auditorium, dividing the latter into three parts. When we came in some gaily dressed children belonging to the audience were running about on these bridges, but though it was very pretty to see them, we could hardly suppose it was for this purpose that the bridges were there. Presently the curtain rose, or, rather, was drawn aside, and disclosed what any one who had ever been at Drury Lane would at once recognise as the den of a robber of the most bloodthirsty kind. Dark and gloomy it was, with a background of black and towering rocks, with hollow caverns in them suggestive of all manner of terrible things behind. Enter the robber and his band, dragging with them a noble lord or knight wearing a countenance of heroic determination and a costume of military aspect. A crimson rope, at least an inch thick, was twisted tightly and very neatly five or six times round his chest and over his arms, so that Samson himself could not have moved in it. His eyebrows went up and the corners of his mouth went down in the most heroic style—in fact, they nearly made a St. Andrew's cross. The robber and his gang were also in warlike attire, and had a highly truculent air. As they came in we heard music begin from somewhere high up at the side of the stage—an invisible singer or singers accompanied by the samisen, the music being of that purely Japanese type which is only to be

appreciated after long familiarity has endeared it to the suffering ear. To the strains of this music (which hardly ever ceased throughout the performance) the *dramatis personæ* began a dialogue, the robber chief (who perhaps was not a robber chief at all, poor man, but only a feudal enemy—we never found out anything about him), evidently threatening terrible things, and the captive samurai hurling a noble defiance in his teeth. This went on for some time, the robber standing and gesticulating, the hero sitting immovable, occasionally uttering some scornful remark in the most extraordinary possible voice. In fact, everybody had an extraordinary voice, and a no less extraordinary pronunciation. We could not understand anything that was said, but of course we caught single words now and then. From these we gathered that the conversation, though violent, and perhaps even abusive, was at the same time highly polite, for every one was not only careful to say “gozari-masu” at full length, which is very ceremonious, but they carefully sounded the “u” at the end of it, which nobody in real life ever does. Their voices were too funny for anything; they spoke slowly and distinctly, with a curious inflection which somehow suggested a parrot talking, and was in every way quite unlike the rapid, soft-voiced enunciation of every-day life, with its little jerks and pauses for breath. Presently we discovered the use of the wooden bridges leading to the stage. While this dialogue was in progress a procession was seen making its way along the one on our left, a great lady in magnificent attire, followed by her maidens, also very gorgeous to behold. They were men every one, but I defy any one to have guessed it who did not know it. Only their height gave them away, for of course they were much taller than Japanese women ever are, though not as tall as English ones. They minced along with the orthodox droop of the *grande dame*, their faces and figures made up in a very realistic way, till they reached the stage, on to which they calmly stepped between the footlights. The lady took up her position on the left of the stage and began to harangue the robber; clearly she was

the wife of the captive knight, come to beg him off by ransom or otherwise—we could not exactly tell how. The robber refused energetically, the husband gave his eyes a frightful roll, but never turned his head; the lady undid the front of her magnificent surcoat of cream-coloured brocade, displaying a kimono of scarlet much embroidered and an obi of cloth of gold, out of which she slowly took her pocket-handkerchief case, and carefully selecting a nice one, she put the little square of tissue paper to her eyes and loudly wept. The weeping was excellent; she was in agonies of tears, and the way her throat was convulsed by sobs was quite heartrending to behold. But oh! her voice was funny; she talked falsetto with an extraordinary undulating squeak, some-



SCENE ON THE STAGE OF MEIJI THEATRE, TOKYO.

where up in the back of her throat, with the most ludicrous effect any one could possibly imagine. This was supposed to represent a woman's voice—the only weak point in the impersonation, for a Japanese woman's voice is invariably soft and pleasing. Of course you cannot expect a man to talk like a woman very successfully, but this conventional voice (which I am told is universally used) seems an unfortunate way of getting over the difficulty. During one speech everybody sat as though turned to stone, and as the stage was in fairly bright light, we tried a photograph. This scene was followed by some others apparently quite unconnected with it, but what struck me was the manner in which some of them were changed. The curtain was not used at all at these times, but the stage itself, with the actors

still on it, swung bodily round as the last word was spoken, and the next scene appeared at the back of it all ready set, and with the characters already beginning to speak. The curtain when it was used did not fall, but was drawn across the proscenium, and on these occasions a tremendously long pause followed. There was quite an extraordinary amount of pantomime in the course of the performance—and that as a rule in what were evidently the most exciting moments of the play—the actor stood silent on the stage for several minutes together—sometimes through the greater part of a scene—yet one could tell quite well what was happening by his expression and gestures. Moreover, the music from the little box up at the side went on continually, and though we, of course, caught never a word, it was clear enough that what was being sung was connected with what was going forward on the stage. I rather think the singer was explaining the feelings of the actor, who confined his own expression of them to dumb show. It sounds comic enough, but it had not by any means a comic effect at the time; in fact, so natural did it seem that it never struck me till afterwards that there was anything odd about it. I wonder if the singer with the samisen acts in some way the part of the chorus in a Greek play. It seems to me much as though he did. I am going to try to find out, for this performance has quite upset all my preconceived ideas as to the probably elementary and barbaric nature of the Japanese drama, and I am rather curious to know more about it. Here, instead of the chaotic noise and rough pantomime I had expected, were regular acts and scenes, realistic and very pretty scenery, charming dresses, powerful and expressive acting, and a quite elaborate system of stage mechanism, including the excellent device of the revolving stage. There is also this curious chorus-like singing from the hidden box above, and I noticed one or two other unfamiliar things. For instance, black figures with veiled faces, who had evidently no concern with the play, came often on to the stage to do things; they carried off the dead bodies after one fight (though another time I saw a dead man

get up and walk off himself), and they often arranged the trains of the performers behind them and waited on them generally, all with a lurking air of not wishing to be seen, though of course they were perfectly conspicuous all the time. Then there were the two curious approaches to the stage through the midst of the audience. They were not always used; sometimes the actors came on from the back or sides of the stage in the ordinary way, but when they were used the acting began the moment the performers got upon them; they came along from behind talking and acting the whole way, and gesticulating violently in the very midst of the audience. We never saw the end of this performance (if it ever had one). It was past eight when we came away, and there was still no sign of anything of the sort.

I wrote to you long ago about my first visit to the theatre in Tokyo, and telling you that I meant to find out more about it. Well, I have been doing so, and rather haunting the theatres ever since. Amongst other things, I have discovered that there are star actors in Japan just as there are with us, and that their admirers are no less fervent, nor, it would seem, are their profits much less. The brightest and most particular star is one Danjuro, and I am now one of his most devoted admirers. He is an old man, rather tall for a Japanese, and by no means particularly good-looking. But he has a long, narrow face, which I perceive is the great thing to have, because it admits of the heroic make-up into the daimyo type of countenance—at least, as that type is recognised on the stage. I have now seen not a few of these once fearsome magnates in real life, quiet and inoffensive-looking elderly gentlemen, most of them with quite round and harmless faces. But this is by no means correct. The stage daimyo, and hero generally, is an exaggeration of what is recognised here as the aristocratic type of face—long and narrow, with eyes and eyebrows sloping up at the outer end. This Danjuro is quite at the head of his profession. He shines equally in male and female parts (all women's parts are taken by

men here), and is also an excellent dancer. Some people call him the "Irving of Japan," but, with all respect to both artists, I cannot think the comparison quite happy for several reasons. Amongst others, I cannot imagine Sir Henry Irving executing a *pas seul* on the stage, attired in two or three long trained skirts, and performing wonders with one or more paper fans the while. But it is true in so far as that he is a very prominent and striking actor, and a great supporter of the legitimate



DANJURO.

drama. This artist comes, as is usual in Japan, of a family devoted to the same art for many real or adoptive generations, and there has long been a Danjuro at the head of the theatrical profession. (Danjuro, by the way, is only a professional name; his real name is quite different.) There are other stars too in plenty—Kikugoro, for instance, also an excellent actor—and indeed in almost every play I have seen in a good theatre even the minor parts are well and carefully done. Just let me describe

to you a play which is going on just now. Danjuro and Kikugoro are both in it. I saw it last Wednesday (it lasts, by the way, from rosy morn till dewy eve). It has rather a complicated plot. The time, of course, is in feudal days, and the plot concerns the fortunes of the heir to a certain great daimyo and the machinations of the mothers of two rival youths to secure the inheritance to their respective sons. The play is not, in point of fact, a very good one, for, as is often the case, it is rather too full of subsidiary plots, each dramatic enough in itself, but rather impairing the effect of the whole. But I wish to describe the scenery and so forth to the calming of your obvious fears that I am turning quite savage in my tastes. This particular theatre is a building quite European externally, but the inside, as to design and arrangements, is quite Japanese, the auditorium rectangular, and the stage occupying the whole of one of the longer sides, and connected with the back by the usual bridges of wood—"hana no michi," or "paths of flowers."

Well, the first scene (or the first I saw, for I was not in at the beginning) was the outside of a Shinto temple, represented with great taste but perfect realism, torii, temple, and blossoming cherry-trees all very well done. Here a scene takes place which gives a clue to the motives of the coming plot, and the ladies taking part in it are all very beautifully dressed. Then there was a scene which introduced a certain element of comedy into the play, which was otherwise promising to be darkly tragical. It was the interior of the mansion of one of the daimyo's councillors, who was the villain of the piece and the guilty lover of one of the fair rivals. This councillor had risen to his present high position from a lowly rank, and his aged uncle, a man of the people, getting wind of his dark designs, comes to beg of him to resign his office and retire to virtue and private life. Accordingly he presents himself outside the magnificent yashiki of the councillor, and we were shown the entrance of the house and the old man in humble attire bowing lowly before the dignified servant, who (I was going to say) opens the door.

The servant goes in with a message asking for an audience of the great man, and comes back bowing to ask his master's uncle to come in. The old man, overpowered by all he sees, is profuse in his thanks, bowing again and again to the very ground, and finally goes in in an agony of self-depreciation, in amusing contrast with the expression of the servant, whose respect for his master's uncle is visibly struggling with his amazement at that uncle's behaviour. The revolving stage next showed us the reception-room within, and the old man in it waiting for his nephew. The room is a very pretty one, with lovely painted fusuma and carved ramma, and, in short, everything that a noble lord's reception-room ought to have. The old man sits on the ground and gazes in silent awe for a little while, during which the hidden musicians give vent to his emotions. Presently, finding that no one comes, his curiosity gets the better of his awe, and there is a farcical moment when he creeps about the room and gapes at all its splendours, finally taking a furtive peep at the elegant tea appointments and the dainty cakes lying on a tray beside them. At last the nephew comes in, and there is a tragic scene in which the uncle begs him to sacrifice his ambition to his soul's welfare, and as his strongest argument produces the *ihai*—memorial tablet—of the councillor's deceased father, in whose name he begs the son to repent. The councillor refuses at first, but finally pretends to see the error of his ways, and promises amendment with sobs and tears. In the next scene, however, we perceive that what he has really resolved on is to put the inconveniently scrupulous old uncle out of the way. It is a charming representation of a reedy lake by moonlight, on which is a boat with some fishermen, who presently find the old man's body floating in the very realistic water with the *ihai* in his bosom. Next comes an outside view of a very grand Buddhist temple, before which presently arrives one of the lady conspirators with her train, and the plot is further developed by the loss of a letter she has written to her paramour the councillor, which falls into the hands of a lady-in-waiting who is attached to the party of her rival.

(This, by the way, is effected by the rather quaint device of making another exquisitely dressed and very graceful lady-in-waiting engage in a hand-to-hand fight with a pedlar outside the gate, in the course of which she drops the letter unawares.) After this we were shown the magnificent apartment within the temple buildings where the wicked lady is staying for the performance of some religious observances. She has discovered the fate of the letter, and determines to discount the effect of its discovery by ruining the credit of the maid-of-honour, which purpose she proposes to effect by hiding the money she had offered to the temple in the toilet-box of the victim. Next comes the accusation of the lady, her indignant protestation of innocence, and the production of the stolen gold from her box before the whole train of gorgeously-attired attendants. The victim falls into the silence of despair, and is left alone on the stage. Next a long pause, during which she says nothing, but her face expresses her mental agonies and the unseen chorus gives vent to her feelings by direful wailings of voice and strings. By and by she gets up, slowly takes off her magnificent outer garment of scarlet brocade, and appears in a satin kimono of the same colour. Then she takes her writing-box and indites a letter, sobbing hard the while. (At this point I began to get a little nervous, for when a virtuous person on the Japanese stage writes a letter in a fit of weeping immediate suicide is to be looked for, and I had conceived a liking for this lady). She has, just as I feared, determined not to survive her honour so cruelly aspersed, and makes up her mind to die, leaving the incriminating letter enclosed in the one she is writing, we are given to understand, to explain the circumstances. This letter she puts in her bosom, and pulling the scarlet kimono down to her waist, shows us a no less beautiful one of white satin underneath. Next she produces the usual dagger, with which she stabs herself in the side and then remains sitting in the same position, never uttering a sound, and decorously covering with her long sleeve the blood which we are to suppose is flowing from the wound. Presently a gentleman,

apparently the person to whom her letter is addressed, comes into the room. He shows grief, but no surprise, on finding how she is employed, and merely asks the cause. For reply she gives him the letter, which he reads and puts into his bosom, and, evidently considering that she has done the only possible thing, makes no attempt to interfere with her, and confines himself to expressions of respectful sympathy. Some gorgeous ladies of her friends now come in with loud lamentations and assist her last moments by taking down her back hair, while the music of the chorus grows more and more afflicting. Finally, when she thinks she has made everything clear she pulls the dagger out of her side and puts an end to her sufferings by plunging it into her throat (a very approved method of suicide with Japanese ladies). This scene may sound a little absurd, but it is not so to see; on the contrary, the effect is profoundly tragic and very touching. It appealed strongly to the sympathies of the audience, and those who were not violently weeping applauded with enthusiasm. This scene was extremely well acted, and so long and so carefully led up to that it seemed more like a drama in itself rather than a mere episode in a larger one. But that is often the case with Japanese plays; more often than not indeed. Last came the discovery of the plot about the heir, the infidelities of the lady, the murder of the uncle and all the other enormities, followed by an elaborate and very picturesque trial scene, and the condemnation and harakiri of the guilty councillor.

So you may see by this one quite ordinary play that the Japanese drama is by no means the barbarous affair you seem to imagine. This sort of tragic melodrama is the staple food of the Japanese playgoer, though there is also comedy and a sort of musical extravaganza to be seen as well; the great thing is the historical tragedy, sometimes with a happy ending, sometimes, in fact usually, I fancy, with an unhappy one. This present unromantic dispensation never appears in it. The heroic spirit of Old Japan—Yamato damashii—is not dead, I fully believe, but it is hidden nowadays under a mask of indifference,

and the body which enshrines it not infrequently wears foreign clothes, with results destructive of all romance. Consequently every playwright goes back for his inspiration to the days of feudal chivalry, when knight and noble looked like knight and noble, and took their own and other people's lives with aristocratic unconcern and swords of priceless value. You did not see your noble samurai in those days sitting attired in slop tailor's clothes in a second-class railway carriage with a bowler hat on, reading the daily paper and drinking, very likely, laager beer, while some base commoner beside him enters into familiar conversation. No, he went about in silks and satins and clattering armour, his two beautiful swords sticking terrifyingly out of his girdle; he took no interest in the Stock Exchange, and had absolutely no notion of party politics, but he was firm in his devotion to his rather narrow ideal of duty, unswerving in his obedience to his code of honour, reckless in his vengeance—a figure altogether better adapted to inspire the proper tragic “pity and fear” than his progressive descendant of to-day, in whose soul, I doubt not, the same fires burn no less brightly all the same beneath the disguising scorïæ of outward innovation. But for all that every play which aspires to any dignity must perforce go back to those feudal times when this knightly figure was to be seen. Some plays are events of real history freely dramatised, the characters bearing either real or fictitious names; others, though their plots are laid in bygone times, are wholly creatures of the author's brain. All, so far as I have seen or heard, are very long and complicated, and suffer from an *embarras de richesses* in the way of episode.

Besides this kind of drama there is another quite distinct from it, and called the “Nô,” which is a severely classical form of entertainment and patronised almost exclusively by the upper classes. These things are absolutely unintelligible to the ordinary foreigner, and, I am told, not to be too easily understood even by the Japanese themselves, for the dialogue is archaic, and wholly removed from the language of every-day life. Even on the popular stage the language is by no means that in daily

use, which is the reason why it is so impossibly difficult to follow a performance; but that of the "Nô," is, I believe, as far removed from modern Japanese as is that of "Piers Plowman" from modern English, not on account of any archaising convention, but because the plays really are old; they are all classical works. Hence it is the custom for the audience to follow the words in a book. I have only as yet seen one of these performances, so I cannot tell you much about them from personal knowledge, more especially as I never made out from beginning to end what they were about. (I say "they" because several were performed in succession.) I understood, however, that the subjects were more or less religious or legendary, and that the end was less amusement than edification (as indeed it seems more or less to be even in the ordinary theatre). Certainly the audience seems much more serious and devout than people usually do in temples—though, to be sure, the fashionable persons usually present at the "Nô" are not often seen in temples at all, as religion has gone out of fashion as unprogressive. But perhaps if they did go there they would be serious too, and the difference in demeanour may be due rather to the difference in class, for the Japanese upper classes seem to me no less grave than the lower are gay. Anyway, a "Nô" audience takes its pleasure seriously, whether on religious or literary grounds, or both, I cannot say. We ourselves, of course, are not inclined to giggle during a performance of the "Agamemnon" or the "Œdipus Tyrannus," but somehow an entirely serious Japanese assemblage has an unexpected effect. The subjects of the plays I did not find out; they were wholly unintelligible to myself, and the Japanese whom I asked seemed unequal to the task of explanation. The performance was not held in an ordinary theatre, but on a specially constructed stage, perfectly bare and with absolutely no scenery though a few little properties were brought in from time to time, I suppose to suggest locality or something of that sort. The back of the stage was shut off by a large gilt folding screen; the other sides were open. In front of the screen sat two or three

musicians, who suggested Shinto both by their dress and by their performance, which was just that same wailing and thumping which I have come to associate with the worship of the Kami. There were also about half a dozen singers dressed in old-fashioned dresses of ceremony, sitting on the floor on one side with fans in their hands. These were the chorus, and they accompanied the acting throughout, singing in that plaintive Japanese style which seems so irresistibly comic at first, and which afterwards gets hold of one in a curious way by dint of much hearing and of picturesque association. These singers did not indulge in many of those bravura passages which are such a side-splitting feature of most Japanese professional singing; often in quieter passages their music had almost the quiet solemnity of Gregorian chanting, though in moments of excitement they and the instrumentalists vied with each other as to who should make the most horrid din. The actors, or perhaps they should rather be called dancers, were only two in number; they had antique robes and headgear of great magnificence, the former wonderfully stiff and voluminous, and wore masks, sometimes with amazing manes of false hair. Their gestures, though stiff, were very expressive, and though I understood never a word of what was going on, the impression made even on my uncomprehending mind was somehow one of a curious solemnity, so serious and dignified was the whole.

All through the performance one could hardly fail to be struck by the extraordinary resemblance of the whole thing to the early Greek drama, or at least to one's idea of what it must have been. Here was evidently present the religious motive; clearly the figures so solemnly pacing the stage were divine or heroic personages of old (one was plainly a Fury); here were the stiff archaic costume, the limited number of actors, the masks, the chorus which sustained the chief burden of the performance, the serious faces of the audience, the clearly evident purpose of edification in the whole thing. However, perhaps this is not so very strange after all, seeing that the two are not wholly unlike in origin, so far as this has been traced in

the case of Japan. Both were in the beginning more or less of a religious character, and both seem to have taken their rise from the invocation of a divinity with pantomimic dances and choral songs.

As early as the seventh century of our era there is mention of the sacred Kagura, which imitates that celestial dance by which the divine Ama-no-Usume lured the Sun Goddess back from the prison of her grief and wrath to shine upon the world and share once more in the joys of heaven, and that same Kagura was even then so old that its beginnings were already lost in the darkness of antiquity. And as into the choral dance of early Greece sundry changes slowly crept till at last it took the shape of the developed drama as we know it, so too the religious dance of Amaterasu's hiding slowly took on new features, passing on lines curiously parallel to those of the Dionysiac chorus on the path which led to drama. As time went on, here too other influences came into play besides the primitive religious motive, chief among which was the introduction of Buddhism from China, and the accompanying increase of the literary spirit. Soon the addition of words altered the character of the performance from a simple dance with orchestral accompaniment; individual characters were sustained by masked performers, whose number never exceeded the two to which early Greek drama also confined itself, so that though here also the chorus still remained of paramount importance, the old religious dance had changed by much the same steps as in Greece to something like the regular drama. As time went on the Buddhist faith pushed the old worship of Amaterasu and the other Kami more and more into the shade; the Kagura pure and simple—the old dance of the Sun Goddess—was relegated to the Shinto temples as a purely religious observance, while the more developed form, now quickly taking on the dramatic character, was seen on occasions unconnected with religious worship, and under Buddhist influence the original idea of the Kagura—the propitiation of the heavenly powers—faded slowly away, and the nascent darma took on a Buddhist colouring.

The first definite thing we read of in its history is the performance in the fourteenth century of the first regular Nô drama under the auspices of the cultivated Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga Shogun, at which time the Nô took the form it has never since departed from, though we are told that the details of stage management were not fixed till later. It was at this time also that the comic interludes, which seem to answer to the Satyric drama which accompanied the Greek trilogy, and which are still associated with the Nô pieces, were settled in their present form.

Well, to go on with the modern drama. For about two centuries, it would appear, there was no further development, till in the troublous times of the sixteenth century something new was evolved from the Nô, which, however, continued its independent existence as before. Here you will notice a difference between the course of the evolution of the Japanese and of the Greek drama; for in Greece as each new step was taken towards the developed drama the older stages passed wholly away, but here the Kagura has continued its separate existence side by side with the forms which have been evolved from it, and the Nô in its turn has gone on to this day side by side with the new drama to which it has given rise.

In the very midst, then, of those dark days of blood and anarchy there dwelt at the great Shinto temple of Izumo a beautiful priestess called O Kuni, whose duty it was to dance the Kagura in the temple before Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. But it seems that the fair priestess, not content to devote the whole of her talents to the service of heaven, proceeded to improve upon the ancient traditions of the sacred dance, and to add to it new graces of her own devising. This she seems to have done to the admiration of all beholders, but we gather that she thus severed her connection with the divine Amaterasu, who perhaps regarded her triumphs as scarcely becoming the ecclesiastical character; anyway she appears to have betaken herself to Kyoto. This part of her career is associated with the name of one Nagoya Sanza, a

samurai, who became her lover either before or after her arrival at Kyoto (authorities seem to differ on this point) and wrote pantomimes for her; also, forgetful of his dignity as a samurai, actually joined her in performing them. These dances or pantomimes, which, it would seem, were a modification of the Nô, were called Kabuki. Some years after the death of O Kuni (who, it is edifying to learn, returned to the church from the stage and ended her days as a nun), there lived at the court of Hideyoshi a maid-of-honour called O Tsu, who was in high favour with the dictator's wife. O Tsu, following the literary traditions of the court ladies of Kyoto, wrote a poem about the romantic hero Yoshitsune and his love for a maiden named Joruri, and his tragic end. This poem was shown by his wife to Hideyoshi who had it set to music, and this was the beginning of the new form of drama called Joruri, after the heroine of O Tsu's piece. Next there arose at Kyoto a maker of marionettes of marvellous perfection. So lifelike were his puppets that he was commissioned to make a set representing all the characters of the drama of O Tsu, and so the piece was performed, the puppets going through all the movements required by the actions and emotions of the play, while the words were chanted by the chorus of living musicians. So popular did this style of acting become, and so great was the furore it created, that living actors found themselves obliged to imitate the puppets. Plays were written for the Joruri marionettes as well as for the Kabuki, O Kuni's version of the Nô, but this style gradually lost its vogue, displaced by the marionettes, and the last stage was the adaptation of themselves to the puppet style by living actors, and this is the style which with greater or less modification is seen at the present day.

The present-day Kabuki falls into two classes which have always, I believe, been recognised—the heavy historical drama of chivalry, loyalty, and blood, and the lighter dramas on social subjects. People seem to regard these as answering respectively to our tragedy and comedy, but they hardly do, for the plots of the lighter

plays are often tragical enough, and involve no end of broken hearts and self-sacrifice over and above the elements which may be regarded as belonging to comedy. Unlike the historical drama, this kind of play often has a love motive. Owing to the social arrangements of Japan, by which marriages are all arranged wholly by parents and "middlemen," the individual preferences of the parties concerned count for very little, and accordingly the subject of marriage remains quite in the background of such plays. The heroine is usually a geisha or a courtesan; the latter a personage holding a position in Japanese eyes quite different from that which she holds in those of Europe. The circumstances of the case are so wholly different, that it is generally recognised that she need not be wholly vicious, and round her figure in poetry and legend and the drama there is often enough a halo of romance. It would be too long to explain all the reasons for this, but the main point is that under the Confucian system of ethics the one paramount virtue in everybody is filial piety, in obedience to which many have addicted themselves for a time to this kind of life. Accordingly such persons are not regarded as unfit subjects for romantic treatment; on the contrary, they and their self-sacrifice, and other virtues figure largely not only in these social plays but in classical tragedy and romance as well. So little is their appearance on the stage confined to the lighter plays that even in the famous historical tragedy of the "Forty-seven Ronin" there is an episode in which the daughter of one of the characters, out of loyalty and filial piety sells herself into this kind of life (at least I have seen it performed with such an episode, but these historical plays are very freely altered from time to time at the discretion of those who produce them).

This story of the "Forty-seven Ronin" (which is a true one) is the one which of all others most appeals to the Japanese heart even to this day, and has been dramatised, I believe, by all the great playwrights. How Asano, Lord of Takumi, goaded beyond endurance, fought with another lord within the precincts of the Shogun's castle, and for that outrageous act was condemned to harakiri

and the forfeiture of all his goods; how forty-seven of his faithful retainers, unable to "live under the same heaven with the slayer of their lord" devoted their lives to the task of avenging him, and after years of waiting and watching at last slew him who had provoked the quarrel, and then one and all solemnly performed harakiri with hearts at rest. This story has been dramatised in different ways. Sometimes it is very hard to follow, and seems rather to be a number of little plots cunningly devised in order to make the spectator forget what in the world the whole thing was about, and the amount of harakiri is blood-curdling; sometimes again there is more regard for unity, and the scenes of blood are kept more discreetly in the background.

Certainly, if one is to try the Japanese drama, so far at least as I know it, by European standards, there may be no little fault to find with it. There is a plentiful lack of unity of action—too many things like subsidiary plots, and a perfect crop of irrelevant incidents, not to speak of whole scenes put in apparently for no other reason than to display the sword play and acrobatic skill of some unknown personages apparently quite unconnected with the matter in hand. Then again, as often as not there is a certain vagueness about the protagonist. Here the contrast with the Greek ideal comes in sharply enough. Instead of one character round whom the whole action revolves, and whose unavailing struggle against relentless fate awakes our pity, there is often an uncertainty in the mind as to which of the heroic personages upon the stage is really the hero, and sometimes again there seems to be no hero at all. As in the Greek drama, the subjects of these plays are mostly well known as history or legend which the dramatists take and modify in their own way, unless indeed (and this seems a fairly common plan) the names only are historical and the plots quite fictitious. The working out of character is not very elaborate; the dissection of motives and the subtle analysis of the workings of the mind are far from the Japanese dramatist. Most of the greater of these tragedies belong to feudal times, you must remember, when the code of ethics was

nothing if not hard and fast, and the stage, with its unvarying support of the official code, must have been a valuable prop to the feudal government, unceasingly teaching the lesson of "life for the lord," constantly presenting scenes where life and love and all the joys and interests of the individual are thrown away without regret for an impersonal ideal. The *dramatis personæ* are not psychological studies; they are indeed hardly persons at all—they are types. The good are good and the bad are bad, and there is no more about it. Each good character acts in accordance with his station in life; the samurai, the wife, the son, the daughter, act each as such a person is expected to act—each displays the virtues conventionally appropriate to his or her position—and over and above this everybody is, of course, brave, and everybody is loyal. The bad characters are bad outright; the murderer, the thief, the traitor, speak and act as such, so that there is plenty of light and shade if nothing else in such a play. From all which you will see that the Japanese drama as one sees it in the theatres of to-day is by no means above criticism from the point of view of art. Yet for all that to me at least it is enormously attractive as a reflection of the nation's character and a picture of the romantic order of things now passing into that twilight of forgetfulness into which our own middle ages have sunk long since.



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